



15 WEST 16th STREET
NEW YORK, N. Y., 10011

The New BEACON

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 313.

JANUARY 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION” **Some Aspects of the Life of a Blind Man** By W. H. COATES

NOTE.—The following sketch is the first of a series which may interest and perhaps help seeing people who have anything to do with the blind, whether officially or unofficially. I hope, too, that it may be useful in parts to those who, having lost their sight recently, have not yet wholly discovered their new life.

All persons, places and events mentioned in the sketches are fictitious. At the same time it is claimed that the hero's experiences and many of his reactions are of a kind familiar to the majority of blind men.

I do not claim that the entire personality as here depicted is attributable to blindness. That condition, however important where it exists, is after all only one of many factors which mould body and mind.—W. H. C.

I.—THE URCHIN

IT can be stated without much fear of contradiction that Tom Thomas made a bad start in life. After his birth and elevation to the dignity of knickers, the next major event was the complete and irreparable loss of his sight.

As usual, there were some counterweights on the other side which did something to balance the misfortune. It would undoubtedly have been a greater disaster if it had occurred later, when his life had expanded and shaped itself in the mould and habitude of the seeing child. It would have been greater if his parents had been rich and stupid, thinking it their business to pamper him with luxuries and stultify him with service ; or if he had lived in a large town, which also would have impeded his growth into an active and self-reliant boy whose disability was reduced by compensatory hypertrophies in other sense-organs.

Blindness caused no psychological upheaval in Tom's early life. When it came upon him he was too young to be more than dimly puzzled by it ; when he was old enough to think about it he was so accustomed to it that he did not mind it. Besides, he could not remember what the previous condition had been like. He was fairly happy without sight ; no paroxysms of rebellion, of self-pity or of envy racked his tender mind. Other boys could see, he could not. That was how things were. He accepted it unconsciously.

Nor did blindness cause any crisis indirectly—by way of his social life. In this class of psychological difficulties the pivotal law seems to be that blindness only matters when someone in

the social group thinks it does. If either the blind person or his associates are acutely conscious of the former's defect; if it is deemed to seep like foul water through his whole personality; if he is regarded by himself or them as a queer, uncanny, remote creature, like one whose blood is green; then is the battleground prepared for mental conflict.

This is not to say that blindness made no psychological difference at all. There are many little ways in which it may have affected him. It may have disposed his parents to leniency and his friends to excessive generosity, thereby engendering in him too optimistic a conception of life. His vanity was tickled by remarks he heard as he walked down the street and turned plumb into his father's house: "Well, that beats me!"—"That's a masterpiece, that is!" Perhaps it helped to make him conceited, even though he only grinned to himself and thought that those people must be rather silly, because obviously it was all so easy.

More profound, though less apparent, was the effect which absence of sight had upon his inner life. Normally, the species of sensation which strikes the consciousness most clearly and forcibly, evoking the fullest response, is visual sensation. When this is gone, the mind is modified in such a way that the attention and energy which formerly waited upon sight shall not go out of commission, but shall be transferred to other departments—notably hearing and touch. One useful result is that a curious power is acquired of perceiving objects at a distance. Another result is that the blind man hears many things which the seeing do not; not so much because the physical organs are more efficient, but rather because he is always listening—listening with all his mind. Thirdly, the impressions of sound and touch and possibly smell have for the blind a greatly increased power of association and stimulation. A sound which means nothing to one who can see will often echo and re-echo through wide regions of the blind man's mind, awaking all sorts of images and memories and emotions there.

One of the ways in which sound excited the mind of Tom the child was by mystifying him. A characteristic of sound-sensation (excluding music, whose value is intrinsic) is that it stimulates without satisfying. It tantalises. It arouses curiosity. Its information is vague, and is in the nature of a signal, inviting us to gather a fuller and more intimate knowledge of its source by the co-operation of other senses. Tom sometimes hung out of his bedroom window under the thatch to pick up the noises of the night. There was that deep sighing noise

which often came out of the West—away beyond Aynbury; sometimes so deep that it was almost a groan. It touched his curiosity. We readily disparage curiosity, but it is a strong and vital instinct, especially in the young.

Yet there was more to it even than that. Tom discovered later that the sound was caused by trains rumbling over a bridge some miles off. One might suppose that such an unmasking would have put an end to its power over him. It did not. He was still moved when he heard that vast windy sigh come out of the bowels of the West. Other sounds attracted him in much the same way—quite commonplace ones, such as the bellowing of a cow in a distant field, or the soft roar of the wind rushing through a distant copse. One element was common to all—remoteness. There, it seems, lay the secret of their fascination. They were voices out of the unperceived spaces beyond his immediate surroundings. They had the enchantment of distance; sounded the call of the horizon. They fired his imagination to supplement perception; to bring within his consciousness a representation of the far landscape which lay between them and him. It needed no more than the bark of a dog coming to him through the silence from some lone farmstead to waken in him that strange longing to extend his perceptions into the distance, which in the absence of a long-range sense could never properly be satisfied.

So imagination had to do its best to replace sight. But how? If Tom did not know what sight was, how could his imagination produce visual images for him? And even if it could do so after rummaging in his subconscious, would his conscious mind understand them? The answer is that the images were translated into terms of touch. If he stood upon a hill, and tried to imagine himself surveying the wide prospect, the sensation conjured up in his mind was one of touch. He felt the view with his hands. Even colour was sometimes represented by texture or consistency. Similarly, if he stood before a cathedral, it was with his hands that he saw or felt in imagination the towering bulk of the façade, the arches and sculpture, the stubborn stone. In reality, of course, one could not gain direct knowledge of a cathedral front by any means but sight. Touch can only be used for close-range work. Yet with a lively imagination the field can be extended indefinitely. How near the image is to the reality will depend both on knowledge previously gained at second-hand and on the power of inference from such knowledge.

All these modifications and complications took place in Tom, though it is possible that some of

them, particularly the colour-touch phenomenon, may belong to adolescence rather than to the stage at which we now know him. He himself thought nothing of it. He had neither the skill nor the inclination to analyse his sensations or his

(To be continued.)

emotions, being busy all the time playing fox-and-hounds, or digging pits in the orchard, or collecting birds' eggs, or trying to rear minnows, or any of the hundred pursuits which occupied the country boy of those unmechanised days.

HOME NEWS

Ben Purse's Broadcast Appeal for Wireless Fund.—The annual broadcast appeal in aid of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund was made on Christmas evening by Mr. Ben Purse, well-known to all readers of THE NEW BEACON as one of the most distinguished blind men in this country. "The Fund was launched," said Mr. Purse, "on Christmas Day, 1929, by our present Prime Minister, Mr. Winston Churchill. You gave generously then, and each Christmas since you have made Wireless for the Blind your special Christmas kindness." Speaking from actual experience, Mr. Purse said that it was impossible to exaggerate the value of wireless to the blind. "Wireless means a great deal to everybody, but how much more it means to those of us who are blind! The Fund's task is never ending. Sets wear out, and obsolete sets have to be replaced. Every year newly blind persons have to be provided for, and since the war broke out enemy action has unfortunately added to our number." In the area covered by the Fund, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, there were approximately 85,000 blind persons, of whom about three-quarters were over 45 years of age. Some of them were invalids who were confined to their rooms and were often lonely. "Think then," concluded Mr. Purse, "of the tragedy of blind people who have no radio set. Judge the importance to them of this Christmas Day Appeal, the only appeal in the whole year made by the Fund. There is now a long, long waiting list."

So far the response has been most generous. Up to the time of going to press, a total sum of £14,317 has been received from 23,897 subscribers.

The Question of a National Committee.—In our August issue we reported the Annual General Meeting of the National Association of Workshops, when a resolution was adopted, recommending the appointment by the Ministry of Health of a national Committee, representative of all phases of blind welfare, with a view to matters being referred to the Regional Bodies for advice and direction.

The Negotiating Sub-Committee of the County Councils Association, at a meeting held on November 19th, expressed the view that the appointment of such a national Committee was neither necessary nor desirable, on the ground that they consider that advisory and co-ordinating functions sufficient for all practical purposes are already provided by the Ministry of Health's Advisory Committee, the Joint Blind Welfare Committee and the National Institute for the Blind. In connection with the last-named, the Sub-Committee expressed regret that the scope of the National Institute tended to be restricted by the refusal of the National Association of Workshops and certain other bodies to be represented upon it.

Prevention of Blindness Committee.—The National Institute's Prevention of Blindness Committee felt it necessary, at the outbreak of war, to suspend the work it had in hand as it considered that any progress in this direction would not be possible under war conditions. During 1942, however, the Committee again met and the Institute's Executive Council, at its meeting in December, reconstituted the Committee in order to make it more widely representative and so strengthen its hands in dealing with certain proposals in which the Institute is deeply interested. Of the proposals, more will be heard in due course.

A Fifth Sunshine Home.—The National Institute has acquired Broad Oak, Northwood, Middlesex, as its fifth Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, in order to provide accommodation for the children on a waiting list which has again grown since the decision to open Court House, Northampton, as the fourth Sunshine Home was made. The Northwood Home will, like the first three Sunshine Homes, be a residential nursery school. The house is eminently suitable for the purpose, being big, light, airy, well-equipped, and surrounded by a charming garden in a healthy situation. It has been planned to accommodate 24 children.

The alterations which had to be made to Court House, Northampton, are nearing com-

pletion, and the whole accommodation for 15 will shortly be taken up.

Control of Willows.—Mr. S. W. Starling, Secretary of the National Association of Workshops for the Blind, has sent a letter to all members of the Association relative to the Control of Willow Rods and Willow Sticks (No. 2) Order, 1943. Under Section 1 (2) of this Order the Ministry of Supply may issue a licence where special circumstances exist to cover the manufacture of prohibited articles.

"In this connection," continues Mr. Starling, "I am authorised by the Ministry of Supply to inform you that any application for a licence to cover the manufacture of prohibited articles, by blind workers, must be made through this Association. If, therefore, you need the help of the Association in this matter, will you please let me have the following information:

"(1) Quantity of willows (stated in sizes) required for the manufacture of prohibited articles, to cover the period to 30th June, 1943.

"(2) A list of the prohibited articles you wish to make.

"(3) The number of blind workers concerned.

"I am desired by the Ministry to point out, however, that the Association cannot advise the granting of a licence where the workers concerned can be employed on any basket work of national importance, such as baskets required by the Ministry of Agriculture or by other Government Departments. Applicants must, therefore, give an assurance that work of the above nature cannot be undertaken by the workers concerned."

A Welsh National Memorial.—The Wales and Monmouthshire Regional Council for the Blind have passed a resolution to establish a Welsh National Memorial, to take the form of a Cottage Home for the aged blind and a Holiday Home for the blind.

St. Dunstan's and American War-Blinded.—Nearly 18 months ago the American Association of Workers for the Blind set up a special committee, under the chairmanship of Mr. Robert Irwin, Director of the American Foundation for the Blind, to care for the war-blinded soldiers, sailors and airmen of the present war. This committee held a special meeting in September last, which was attended by Lt.-Col. Sir Ian Fraser, who, after telling those present something of the work done by St. Dunstan's, said, that he intended offering to the U.S. Administration all the facilities of St. Dunstan's to members of the United Nations Forces blinded in action,

while awaiting transportation to their home country. No reimbursement would be required in view of the generosity already shown to Britain by the United States, but Sir Ian expressed the hope that America would do what she could for British soldiers in a similar situation.

The committee recommended that the Government should gratefully accept the offer made by St. Dunstan's and enter into a contractual arrangement whereby reasonable compensation should be made for the services offered. Further, they recommended that reciprocal services should be extended to any blinded soldier of the United Nations, particularly of Great Britain, where such blindness occurred in any U.S. theatre of war.

At a lunch given last month by St. Dunstan's to senior officers of the American and Canadian Army Medical Services, Sir Ian Fraser announced that the first American guest, an upper turret gunner, who was blinded during enemy action, is already in residence.

Sir Ian compared the eye casualties of the two wars. Two-thirds of those blinded in action during the last war were wounded by high-explosive shells and hand-grenades. In nearly all the eyes were penetrated by metal fragments. The remaining third were the result of bullet wounds. In this war more have been blinded by concussion changes in the eye, causing collapse or irreparable damage through hæmorrhage. With less damage to sinuses surgery had become more plastic in character. The tendency of modern weapons, including aerial bombs, was to increase the high explosive and decrease the metal until it was merely a container. Much of the metal being non-ferrous, the electro-magnet had become less important.

Of the 288 Service and civil defence casualties known to St. Dunstan's, 88 had recovered some useful sight. Of the others, 100 were in training or had been trained at St. Dunstan's in England, 30 were prisoners of war, 30 were in South Africa or India, and Sir Ian estimated there would be 40 more from recent fighting in Africa. St. Dunstan's now had units in Cairo, India and South Africa.

The Blind Piano Tuner of Malta.—Those who subscribed to the recent appeal in THE NEW BEACON and the *National Braille Mail* on behalf of Mr. John Born, the piano tuner, of Malta, will be interested to know that the sum of £55 has been raised by private donations, and that further help has been given by the Committees of the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind and the National Institute for the Blind. These funds are being administered by Lt.-Col. Agius,

the Trade Commissioner for Malta in London, to whom the organisers of the appeal are grateful for the interest he has shown. Wherever at all possible, an acknowledgment has been sent to all who contributed; but to all who wished to be anonymous, as well as to any whose addresses may not have been quite legible, Mr. E. R. Fisher would like to send his gratitude for their response. All may rest assured that their gifts are being scrupulously administered, and that our friend's distress will be relieved by this means.

The Cheerful Giver.—Anyone who reads letters sent with voluntary contributions to charities cannot fail to be impressed with the good-will that accompanies the gifts, and the genuine pleasure shown by the givers. Three typical letters (which could be multiplied almost indefinitely) recently came to one of the National

Institute's Branch Secretaries. In the first a collector living in an extremely isolated rural area said that she had been responsible over a period of years for raising nearly £500; during the present year she and her friends had collected £45, and recently £19 had been realised by the sale of Christmas gifts, "all home-made from bits and pieces." The second letter was from the head-master of a village school, where in eighteen years over £70 had been contributed, and a record collection of £6 5s. od. last year had been substantially beaten in the present year by one of £11. And the third was a contribution of £32 ("yet another Christmas stocking record") sent by a crippled railway servant, who interests himself in other organisations, and writes of his latest record that "many of my hopeful but doubtful dreams" are coming true.

FOREIGN NEWS.

Prevention Work in Palestine.—Following is an extract from an airgraph received by the Southern Regional Association for the Blind from Mr. M. G. Taylor, who was working in the Blind Welfare Department of the West Bromwich C.B.C. until he joined the Royal Air Force last year and is now in the Middle East.

Mr. Taylor says: "Have recently met the Secretary of the Ophthalmic Hospital of St. John in Jerusalem during a stay in that city on leave

with my uncle. Not a great deal of blind beggars are seen in the streets of Palestine, but the records published for 1941 tell a different story, not only of the prevalence of trachoma but of the immense amount of good work undertaken by the Hospital. The number of *new* patients per year in 1937 was 21,369 and in 1941, 21,933, irrespective of in-patients and existing cases. Fortunately the fellahin are becoming 'hospital conscious,' though it will take a long time to get the same standard as we have."

PERSONALIA

The Chairman and Vice-Chairmen of the Main Committees of the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind are as follows:—

Education and Research Committee: MR. T. H. TYLOR, B.C.L., M.A., *Chairman*; MR. WM. KERSHAW, *Vice-Chairman*.

General Purposes Committee: Owing to the death of MRS. JOHN M. KNAPP, J.P., the Chairmanship is vacant; ALDERMAN N. GARROW, J.P., *Vice-Chairman*.

Industries Committee: MR. GODFREY ROBINSON, M.C., *Chairman*; MR. H. S. EDKINS, *Vice-Chairman*.

Finance Committee: MR. CLEMENT DAVIES, K.C., M.P., *Chairman*; MR. W. L. PLATTS, *Vice-Chairman*.

* * *

MR. FRANK INGLE STAINSBY, Assistant Secretary to the National Institute for the Blind, has, on medical advice, relinquished his position, but the Council of the Institute, recognising his long and valuable service, has given him a part-time

appointment which will ensure his continued connection with the Institute's work. Mr. Stainsby was appointed Assistant Secretary in 1909, and for over 30 years has given to the blind sterling service distinguished by unflagging loyalty and conscientiousness.

To fill the vacancy, MR. EDWARD EVANS, Headmaster of the East Anglian Schools for Blind and Deaf Children since 1928, has been appointed Assistant Secretary to the Institute. Mr. Evans has for years past been an outstandingly successful teacher and under his administration the East Anglian Schools have greatly developed. He is a member of the Teachers' Registration Council and of the Executive of the Royal Society of Teachers, also Vice-Chairman of the Special Schools Advisory Committee of the National Union of Teachers. He is a former President of the Yarmouth Rotary Club, and a member of the Yarmouth Town Council and of its Education Committee. He was also first Chairman of the Yarmouth Youth Committee.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

HOMES FOR THE BLIND

The Homes Sub-Committee of the National Institute has recently considered a number of representations made to it on the need for more Homes for the Blind. The consequent analysis of the facts and the questions of policy involved—in particular the extent and nature of the need, and what agencies should provide and maintain Homes for the Blind—has been found useful, and it is thought that its publication would be of service to Local Authorities and Agencies for the Blind in general. The Committee would greatly appreciate the expression of views on this problem, not necessarily for publication.

The Pre-War Position.

Before the war it was generally held that the need for Homes was diminishing, by reason of the generous scales of Domiciliary Assistance granted in most areas. At the same time the continued increase in the number of old blind people involved a corresponding increase in the number requiring care in their old age. A census of accommodation available in Homes for the Blind, taken by the Institute in 1938, showed a total of 39 Homes with 943 permanent places for men and women, of which 111 were then vacant. The number of blind people in Homes not specifically designed for the blind is very small, and it may be added that while the Institute, for practical reasons, has concerned itself with the question of Homes which are exclusively for blind persons, it is inclined to think that Homes in which blind residents would be associated with sighted persons might be highly advantageous.

Present Provision.

A further census of accommodation was made last year and the information obtained was published in THE NEW BEACON for April, 1942. There were then 41 Homes for the Blind, including the three Homes for War-blinded civilians, but excluding St. Dunstan's. There appeared to be a net decrease of 100 in the total of places. A number of Homes had been compelled to reduce their accommodation, and most of them were filled to capacity. The return was not complete, in so far as it did not succeed in obtaining accurate knowledge of a certain number of Homes specifically created for evacuees. The number so provided for is uncertain.

Both inquiries emphasised the comparative shortage of accommodation for men. There are 4 Homes for men only, 13 for women only, and 15 for men and women. The Institute's Homes Committee believes that a well-managed Home for persons of both sexes has a more natural and therefore happier atmosphere than is likely to be found in Homes for men and women separately.

Extent and Nature of Present Demand.

Whatever the demand for accommodation in Homes was before the war, there is, beyond doubt, a considerable unsatisfied demand at the present time. Part of it is of a temporary character, arising from evacuation and the pre-occupation with war work of people who, in normal conditions, would provide for blind relatives at home. On the other hand, some of the new need now made evident may outlast the war. It will take time for many families to re-settle themselves, and it is probable that a number of people who have found accommodation in Homes during the war will find that Home life suits them; on the other hand, families may find that they are glad to be without rather burdensome old people.

Examination of applications show many people who are old and infirm, or suffering from defects of body or mind additional to blindness.

Homes for Deaf-Blind.

The opening of two Homes for Deaf-blind persons before the war, despite the opinion commonly held that Homes for such persons exclusively would be impossible to manage, has, apart from any war-time need, set moving a larger demand for such accommodation. The experience so far gained indicates that, though Homes for the deaf-blind are difficult to run, they are not impossible; and that the needs of many deaf-blind persons can only be properly met in Homes specifically maintained for their benefit. On the other hand, such Homes are peculiarly difficult to staff and need much voluntary help from neighbours, and there is now an acute and growing shortage of staff and, to a smaller extent, of voluntary helpers.

The Infirm Blind.

The policy of most existing Homes is not to admit persons who are bed-ridden or in permanent ill-health requiring special nursing. On the other hand, many of the residents in existing Homes are of advanced age and, once admitted, they are retained if they become ill, at least until they require hospital treatment. The desire of residents in Homes not to be sent to the

Infirmity when they become bed-ridden is very strong, and the management of Homes for the Blind has to weigh that against the difficulty of providing special attendants and the undesirability of attempting to give, in a Home for the Blind, nursing treatment which can be given most effectively in a hospital.

New Provision.

The lessons taught by experience must not be ignored in any plans for new Homes. Premises must be adequate in themselves and placed in a helpful environment. The need for good kitchens, sculleries, food stores, baths and sanitary arrangements goes without saying. The bedroom space should be sufficient, not only for health, but for some measure of privacy. Sitting-rooms must be warm and comfortable, and they, too, must give some chance of privacy to residents who want to foregather with their own intimates among the residents, to pursue their special interests, or to enjoy a quiet talk with friends from outside. One common lounge for everyone is more likely to breed quarrels than to prevent cliquiness. Room for the pursuit of hobbies and occupations is also essential; the Institute's experience has fully convinced it of the moral and social dangers of idleness, and it has recently taken steps to strengthen the staff of its Homes so as to provide more fully for the encouragement of handicrafts. It is essential for the happiness of any Home that it should be situated in a place where friendly neighbours can be found, to read to the residents, take them for walks and give them outside social opportunities, and where distractions and entertainments are available both for residents and staff.

The average age of residents in most Homes for the Blind is high. It has always been difficult to find a suitable place for comparatively young men or women. On the other hand, the number of younger people asking for Home accommodation has not been large; most of those who do apply suffer from some other handicap.

Generally, it may be said that new Homes should be planned for residents who are handicapped by age or other infirmities. While they should offer the maximum inducement to activity of body and mind, and every facility for such activities, they should provide also for non-surgical treatment and rest. Ideally a Home for the Blind should provide single rooms for most of its residents, with a ward or wards for those who are permanently bed-ridden, and perhaps a few larger rooms for men and women who prefer to share rooms with others. Old houses cannot respond to this ideal. Where and

when Homes for the Blind can be built for the purpose, they should be planned so as to give each resident who desires it a room of his or her own. Better still, they should be built on the Cottage Homes principle with separate quarters for single people, or married couples, grouped around a common centre, or as blocks of single room flats with a good common-room and provision for common meals. Homes of this type have been built, or are planned, in several places, notably Portsmouth, Bournemouth and Leeds. The example thus set cannot be followed until new building operations become practicable, and in the meantime any new Homes will have to use houses planned for private residence. At the present time even tolerable premises for that purpose are difficult to obtain, and "tolerable" must be read with an eye to labour saving.

For reasons indicated above, isolated country houses, however good in themselves, are not likely to make happy Homes. Many seaside resorts, normally ideal situations for Homes, are either crowded out or dangerous. Country towns or the suburbs of large cities, which offer no particular targets to hostile attack, would seem to be the best choice, and houses suitable at any rate for temporary use have in fact been found during the war in such situations. The commitments, however, are heavy. The rent of furnished houses is high. Furniture is scarce and expensive. Staff has to be sought in advance and highly paid. Any new venture must be carefully considered from this angle before the responsibility of receiving residents is undertaken, and any Agency which is already responsible for the maintenance of Homes has an obvious first duty to the people already under its care.

On the whole, it seems wise to think of the "new need" as *prima facie* an evacuation need which should be met by the Evacuation Authorities, who should be advised that blind people can be accommodated with sighted people and that the Local Agencies for the Blind will gladly arrange for visiting and helping any blind people brought in this way into their areas.

At the same time a valuable contribution could be made—as it has been, for example, in Wiltshire, Colchester and by the Northern Counties Association for the Blind—by any Agency which, by the use of its local knowledge and connections, can secure a house and maintain it as a war-time Home for blind persons only. Apart from meeting the immediate need, such war-time Homes should be able to test how many of their residents are likely to require permanent accommodation.

Responsibility for Providing Homes.

The question then arises whether, in the light of past history, present facts and future probabilities, Homes for the Blind should be provided by—

- (a) Local Authorities ;
- (b) Voluntary Societies,
 - (i) Local,
 - (ii) National.

This question, like many others, should not be regarded as an "either—or" question. As there are many types of blind people with different interests and different requirements, so there should be many types of Homes, and there is no reason that Homes should not be provided by any agency which has the interest of the blind at heart. Homes of special character, providing a congenial atmosphere for any particular group of people, should be encouraged. Such a Home as St. Raphael's at St. Albans, with a definite church (Anglican) atmosphere, is exactly what is wanted by some blind people ; and there are other Homes with special traditions and attachments which play a valuable part in the general scheme.

Community life is sometimes, but rarely, a perfect way of living ; it can be just tolerable ; it can be most unpleasant. Its intrinsic difficulties are aggravated when people of dissimilar type and tastes are compelled to live day after day in each other's company. Provision by Local Authorities for people in their own area, or by Voluntary Societies of limited scope, is bound to suffer from this disadvantage. The locally provided Home may have a special advantage in the local interest it arouses, and it is undoubtedly an advantage to the work of the Local Agency to have a Home under its management, in its own area, in evidence that its work is of a practical nature. Where local interest can be keenly maintained, the residents undoubtedly benefit by the local connection. On the other hand, the National Institute's experience has proved beyond question that invaluable local interest and help can be obtained for a Home established by a national body, and the need for classification and provision for different requirements can best be met by a national or regional body. If a Local Agency desires to maintain a Home of its own, it is only fair to the residents that those who are responsible for it should decide what type of blind people they mean to provide for, and limit the Home to that type. In large areas the maintenance of several Homes of diverse character might meet the greater part of the local need.

Some of the representations recently made to the National Institute for the Blind have been

based on the assumption that it undertakes to provide Homes wherever there is an unsatisfied need, and this opportunity is taken to make it clear that the National Institute's policy has been to meet, not the need for Homes generally, but rather those needs which appear to be substantial and not likely to be met otherwise. It has done what it has been called upon to do from time to time, and it has taken advantage of opportunities offered to it—the Homes of Recovery for war-blinded civilians, for example, were established because the special and urgent need for such centres of rehabilitation obviously could not be met by local action ; its Home for deaf-blind people at Harrogate resulted from the enquiry it initiated in 1932 into the number and condition of deaf-blind persons in the country, and from the brilliant initiative of Fellowship House, Hoylake ; its Holiday Home at Scarborough was established in 1939 on representations from the Northern Counties Association for the Blind members of its Council with regard to the shortage of Holiday Home accommodation in the North of England ; its other Homes have varied origins. There has never been any national planning of Homes and, apart from its present intention to maintain one of its Homes of Recovery as a permanent rehabilitation centre for persons blinded in adult life (the need for which has been proved by the experience already gained at Torquay and Bridgnorth) it favours local or regional provision of Homes where the conditions outlined in this note can be met, and it desires to retain its own role as the agency which fills gaps and meets requirements outside the scope of local or regional action.

RETROSPECT

By ALLENE PECK.

I ONCE could see, and so I still remember
 A sea of bluebells, lovely and serene ;
 A wooded hillside, one day in September,
 The golden leaves, with sunlight in between.

I recollect a laughing river flowing
 Past spray-splashed rocks, with fishes leaping
 high,
 While far beyond, in perfect order growing,
 A row of pine trees, black against the sky.

This lovely world, so shadowed by oppression,
 Will leave its mark forever on my mind.
 For we can never smile till we have suffered,
 And I could never see, till I was blind.

A WAR-TIME STUDY GROUP

THE war has curtailed the activities of a number of organisations devoted to the welfare of the blind and, for a variety of reasons, this is particularly true of the transactions of old pupils' associations. Accordingly, those Old Boys of Worcester College for the Blind who have recently founded in London a Group devoted to the study of the many contemporary problems of Blind Welfare, considered that a short report of what took place at their inaugural meeting might interest a wider circle of blind people and those interested in their doings.

A further reason for publishing the proceedings of this meeting is that it is hoped that organisations of the old pupils of other blind schools will co-operate with members of the Old Boys' Union of Worcester College in discussing those numerous problems which all blind people, whatever their class, school or occupation, may have in common. In fact, although those present at the meeting, in directing this report to be made, desired the attention of the blind community to be drawn to certain points which will be mentioned later, their primary object was to record their opinion that the time has come for educated blind men generally to play a more active role in Blind Welfare.

A general reorganisation, even if it were desirable, could hardly be attempted during the war, but by discussing now the many problems which will arise if, and when, Blind Welfare is absorbed into a general state security plan, and by applying their own experience to the task of remodelling blind education, blind people have an immediate contribution to make.

In particular, the Group is of the opinion that the time has come for those interested in Blind Welfare to re-examine with fresh minds every aspect of the employment problem. As none of those present, and few of the Union's members, are engaged in industry, it is in this connection that the Group intends to seek the co-operation of other blind people with direct knowledge of industrial matters. The Group is particularly anxious that experience gained as a result of the war-time employment campaign should be correlated now so as to strengthen the case for the engagement of the blind in general industry after the war. In this sense the times seem peculiarly favourable for a permanent improvement, by the blind, of their lot as well as for the demonstration of their usefulness to the community in general.

In this connection the Group wishes to emphasise the point that, although in their work and in their play the blind are largely dependent upon the seeing, there is a sense in which it remains true to say that a blind person knows best what a blind person can do. Hence, at a time such as the present, when every endeavour must be made to see that every member of the community is, subject to necessary limitations imposed by the war, engaged upon the job to which he or she is best suited, special consideration should be given to the number of people engaged in Blind Welfare and education. Even a slight increase in this number might, in addition to providing some blind people with employment, render some seeing people available for other work and add to the number of those who can assist in tackling the problem of the employment of the blind from the point of view of the blind.

The importance of propaganda in relation to employment in particular, and to Blind Welfare in general, is one of the subjects to be studied by the Group. Whilst deploring the use of propaganda which is exclusively designed to appeal to sentiment, on the ground that it tends to undermine the rational claim of the blind to be considered as intelligent and contributing citizens, the general opinion was that there should be more propaganda on improved lines. It was suggested that in addition to the description of what things blind people can do and how they do them, and the illustration of their various needs, there might be more propaganda demonstrating the fact that blind people often tend to become objects of considerable psychological interest to their seeing friends and acquaintances.

Although the Group should be able to assist immediately in exploring fresh avenues of non-industrial employment for the blind, it is considered that the Group can at present best assist the cause of Blind Welfare in the sphere of blind education. Typical suggestions put before the meeting were :—

1. That there is no real conflict between the educational theory which aims at producing efficient blind men with mature appreciation of their own particular physical and emotional environment, and the theory which aims at making blind men courteous and acceptable members of ordinary society.

2. That courses in office routine should be

made available to blind people who require such instruction.

3. That blind people engaged in similar occupations, such as commerce or the law, should try to pool their resources for dealing with common difficulties in their everyday work arising from the fact that they are blind.

In conclusion, it is hoped that the foundation of this Study Group will arouse the interest of those many educated blind people who have tended in the past to regard Blind Welfare as no concern of theirs, and will lead to the formation of similar Groups in other parts of the country.

It is encouraging to know that another such Group has already been formed in Leicester by a member of the London Group, and that it has established friendly relations with the Royal Leicester Institution for the Blind. It is to be hoped also that the deliberations of such bodies will receive the active attention of Local Authorities and voluntary associations concerned with the administration of Blind Welfare.

[Any correspondence relative to this article addressed to the National Institute for the Blind, marked "Worcester College Old Boys' Study Group," will be passed on to the Chairman of the Group.—EDITOR.]

PLACEMENT AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND

FORTY years ago Charles Campbell (son of Sir Francis Campbell of the Royal Normal College) was directed by the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind to visit a number of factories in the State, in order to ascertain the possibilities of employing blind persons in processes hitherto only attempted by the seeing, and he was successful in effecting a number of placements. To-day, the United States and Canada have acquired a wealth of valuable experience in the matter of Placement (the very word is an importation from the States), and certain aspects of the problem, as, for example, the establishment of blind men and women as managers of kiosks for the sale of confectionery and periodicals, these countries have made peculiarly their own.

For many years it has been recognised in this country that the handicap of blindness should impose no insuperable bar to the following of certain professional and semi-professional careers. The blind man may study law, take Holy Orders, teach in school or University, work as a masseur, shorthand-typist, telephonist or piano-tuner, and in all these take his place as an equal among seeing competitors. In the present article, however, we are specially concerned with Placement in a narrower sense, as relating to manual and semi-manual occupations, carried out by the blind factory operative side by side with the seeing.

It is not possible to assign any definite date when such placement was first discussed as possible, but the evidence of witnesses who appeared before the Departmental Committee on the Welfare of the Blind in 1915 shows that it was by this time a live question. We read in the minutes of that Committee that "previous

to the Workmen's Compensation Act coming into operation, partially blind people were employed in considerable numbers at the workshops for the sighted in Glasgow." Mr. Stainsby, giving evidence, said that he had examined the possibilities of finding factory employment for the blind in Birmingham, but had come to the conclusion that it was impracticable, and Mr. Miles Priestley of the Royal Institution for the Blind, Bradford, stated that he had discussed the matter with managers of factories, and "they will not give the slightest consideration to it."

Meanwhile, Germany had been considering the possibility of employing war-blinded men in factories, and in 1915 had passed a Disablement Law, requiring every employer of labour to absorb at least 2 per cent. of disabled people. The Siemens-Schukert Works at Berlin, which were fortunate in having in Director Perls a man of exceptional vigour, sympathy and imagination, gave special consideration to the employment of the blind under this Law, and in 1926 there were over 100 blind persons working there, and a further 200 in training.

Early in 1925 the National Institute's Technical and Research Committee began to consider the possibilities of Placement, and appointed an investigator to visit factories in the interests of the blind; we learn from the Institute's Report for 1925-6 that work had been found for five girls, and negotiations were proceeding on behalf of others. For a time the work was held up as a result of the coal strike, but the setback was only temporary. In 1927 an important step forward was taken when the first meeting was held of a new Appointments Board, set up by the Institute, and including among its members not only experienced

workers for the blind, but business men of standing, who were prepared to use their influence in the interests of the blind worker. The Board decided to explore the possibilities of employment for two classes of blind persons, (a) those who had received University and/or secondary education, and were thought suitable for professional careers, and (b) those capable of employment in "sighted" factories. A long list of operations suitable for the blind worker was compiled by the Institute's investigator, and covered processes in connection with the preparation of foodstuffs, toilet requisites, photography and engineering.

A Placement Committee was set up by the Council of the National Institute to carry out the work on the lines suggested by the Appointments Board, and, in order that it might have a scientific basis, this Committee decided to employ the services of the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. A prolonged investigation by the N.I.I.P. was therefore begun in 1927, its research being planned under three heads:—

1. Suitable processes in factories employing sighted labour.
2. The development of new industries in, or in connection with, existing workshops for the blind, to be carried on under conditions and manufacture and sale similar to those at the time in vogue.
3. The development of new industries on a sub-contracting basis, arrangements being made with some commercial firm for the manufacture under contract of some necessary article by processes carried on in workshops run mainly by blind labour.

Valuable work was carried out by the N.I.I.P. between 1927 and 1931 in this wide field. Visits were paid to a large number of factories which *prima facie* seemed suitable for the employment of blind workers; with the co-operation of workshop managements research was carried on into existing methods of production, in order to see if improvements could be suggested; tests of manual dexterity and of intelligence were given in institutions for the blind; the possibilities of sub-contracting were explored; investigations were carried out into the process of bell-set forming by blind workers, in connection with telephone manufacture; an inquiry as to the possibilities of employment of blind in Insurance (on the lines of Insurance under-writing which had been successfully carried out by selected blind men in America) was made. Throughout the three years of co-operation between the National Institute for the Blind and the National In-

stitute of Industrial Psychology every attempt was made to approach the problems from a scientific theoretical standpoint.

In 1930 the Placement Committee considered that an adequate theoretical basis had been established, and that its next step must be the appointment of an officer to seek out new posts and to keep in touch with those blind people for whom employment had been found; in this way the factory which had made the experiment of engaging a blind worker and the blind worker himself would realise that after-care as well as actual placement was not overlooked. A woman Placement Officer was therefore appointed, but the times were not propitious, for already the economic blizzard had begun to blow, and employers were in no mood to make experiments. When the sighted worker was standing idle in the market-place because no man had hired him, it was rather hopeless to expect a blind man to succeed. A limited number of placements were, however, effected in occupations which at that time did not rank for augmentation, and in order to give employers the chance of proving the capacity of the workers, the National Institute paid augmentation.

In view of the difficulties of the time, it was decided in the following year that the appointment of the Placement Officer should be terminated, and an Employment Officer should be appointed instead. All avenues in sighted industries appeared to be blocked for the time being by continued trade depression, and it was therefore decided that the question of introducing new trades in workshops for the blind should be explored. The newly appointed Employment Officer was asked to survey the field with this in view, either by the complete production of a commodity or the partial production of a commodity to the order of other firms on a sub-contract. For the next few years the Employment Officer carried out exhaustive inquiries over a wide range of trades which appeared at first sight likely to be promising from the point of view of the blind worker. Thirty-nine industries were examined, and among those reported upon as offering chances of blind employment were soap-making, cardboard-box making, flag-day emblem making, the making of pre-cast breeze slabs, cosmetic making and weaving on automatic looms. The suggestions made formed the basis of two articles, published in THE NEW BEACON in August and September, 1936, under the title "Employment Research." In this article reference was made to some interesting experiments. These included the

setting up of a small workshop at Leicester in 1935 for the making of cardboard boxes, under the auspices of the Royal Leicester Institution, a trade which is still being carried on; in January, 1935, a training department for the making of hand-made cigarettes was started by the Incorporated Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind, but the demand for these did not prove adequate and after some time the work was discontinued; the manufacture of toilet soap by the Association, however, met with greater success, and still continues; the Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind began the making of flag-day emblems in 1936, and has gone on since, in spite of the destruction of the Institution's workshops by enemy action early in 1941. As a result of the researches of the Employment Officer, it was possible to state in the Report of the National Institute for 1937-8 that "We now possess much more definite information as to which industries offer opportunities for the employment of blind labour, and what technical processes can be successfully accomplished by blind workers." The ground had been cleared for further advance.

When the National Institute terminated the appointment of its Placement Officer, responsibility for placement was entrusted to its Services to the Blind Department, and in spite of the difficulties of the times, this department was successful in placing a number of blind people, sometimes after giving them preliminary training. By arrangement with the Royal Normal College, the Institute gave practical office experience to shorthand-typists trained at the College, and placed them when the period of practical experience was ended. Telephonists were also trained and employment found for them. Other occupations were constantly studied and it seemed that the job of placement in sighted work was on the whole most effectively performed by the Institute's own staff. The report furnished to the Council last February showed that in the past year, in addition to a number of massage placements and the finding of curacies or livings for three clergymen, the following had been placed:—

Telephone operators	..	..	7
Shorthand-typists	..	..	4
Instructors (various)	..	..	4
Returned to former employment for re-training	..	..	2

Kiosk keeping as an employment for the blind was initiated by the Institute as a result of the impression made on the Secretary-General's mind, when he attended the 1931 World Conference in New York, by the success

of "concession stands" in the U.S.A. and Canada.

None the less, the Institute was not satisfied that more could not be done and, in 1938, it reconstituted its Placement Committee, which found itself at first compelled to make a prolonged study of the Placement and Employment investigations and experiments already made by the Institute. Inquiries were made from a number of larger Institutions for the Blind as to how many blind persons in their area known to them required placement of any kind, and this investigation was under way when the outbreak of war altered the whole position.

In May, 1940, that is, when the anticipated shortage of labour was beginning to make itself felt, the National Institute approached the Ministry of Labour and National Service with a view to ensuring that the blind in all parts of the country should be given an opportunity of contributing to the war effort. As has already been related in THE NEW BEACON, the Ministry was not quick to move in this matter, but the contact was continued and, after a great deal of hard work, the employment campaign, which is now in full swing, was launched. The results so far achieved by it are reported elsewhere in this issue.

Next to the importance of ensuring its complete success lies the question "What next?" What is going to happen to blind labour when war pressure is relaxed? Will factories be willing and able to employ blind operatives at remunerative rates? Will processes performed by the blind in the war be brought into Workshops for the Blind, and will Blind Welfare take serious note of the rather shocking fact that there were at the outbreak of this war hundreds of blind people marked down as unemployable who have proved themselves capable of holding their own side by side with sighted workers? The persistent work of the National Institute on Placement has proved the value of theoretical research combined with practical experience in finding openings. The strongest case breaks down in practice when there is a glut of labour. On the other hand, when there is a shortage of labour, blind workers prove in practice the theoretical case which has been made for their employment in modern industry.

NOTE—Since the above article was written, the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled Persons has been published. We hope to deal with its recommendations relating to the blind and partially sighted in our next issue.

MORE ABOUT FIGURES

THE saying that "There are lies—damned lies—and statistics" is the favourite proverb of people who prefer that their ignorance should remain unmolested and their complacency undisturbed. The wise would rather have it that there are statistics, facts and truth. Statistics never tell the whole truth, but they present an aspect of the facts without which the facts are not the truth.

The November issue of THE NEW BEACON expressed some uneasiness on the statistics of blindness, particularly those which appear to indicate an unreasonable amount of variation in the incidence of blindness in different parts of England and Wales and those relating to blindness in infancy. The need for further investigation was suggested and it was added that we ought to know more of the incidence of blindness at different ages.

Such inquiries should, at no time, be neglected; statistical discrepancies may mean anything from inaccurate compilation to the existence of unknown factors in causation. The most welcome interest now being taken in prevention of blindness makes closer examination of the statistics of blindness inevitable. No fruitful work on prevention can be done until the facts of what has to be prevented are stated accurately in their quantitative and qualitative aspects.

We suggested in November that the decline in the number of children registered as blind in England and Wales has been arrested. Let us now look more closely at the figures which show year by year the number of blind children in England and Wales under five years of age. The decline in those figures was a cause for great satisfaction. Here they are according to the returns of the former Union of Counties Associations for the Blind and the present Regions. The number registered reached its peak in 1922, after a steady increase which no doubt represented an improvement in registration rather than a real increase. In 1927 to 1929 it stood at 258, and it may be assumed that since that date registration has been thorough. In 1932 the total had dropped to 225; in 1933 it was 244; and in 1934 it was 231. The subsequent years have been: 1935, 216; 1936, 206; 1937, 196; 1938, 195; 1939, 172 (without Wales); 1940, 195; 1941, 201.

There has therefore been an actual rise from the 1938 level. That is due possibly to temporary, or accidental, causes. It is certainly evident that there is not a continued and progressive decrease. Moreover the present increase in the amount of venereal disease, of which much has recently been said in Parliament and the Press, gives us only too good reason to fear that there will be a subsequent increase in the amount of ophthalmia neonatorum and of infantile blindness.

There has been a great increase recently in the demand for admissions to the National Institute's Sunshine Homes and, contrary to all expectation, the Institute has been compelled, despite the difficulties which beset new enterprises in wartime, to open a fourth Sunshine Home at Northampton, and to purchase a house, at Northwood, Middlesex, for a fifth.

The significance of all this should be understood and studied by everyone connected with Blind Welfare. The Institute is in actual contact with 98 blind children under the age of five. When Northwood is opened it hopes to be able to cater for all these children: at present a number of them are on the waiting list. There appear to be 103 others living at home, or possibly in institutions other than Sunshine Homes. We do not know how many of the 103 are, by reason of mental defect or other incapacities, below the Sunshine Home level, or how many are so well cared for at home that they should remain there. In fact we have accurate knowledge of rather less than half the total of blind babies in the country.

Full knowledge is required not only in connection with the present move for prevention of blindness, but for provident planning for the education of blind children generally. Knowledge of blind infants is in every sense fundamental. Is more provision required for mentally defective blind children? There is good reason to believe that there is. Should there be more than one Court Grange

for retarded blind children? The National Institute has already designated Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth, as a second Court Grange, but will one other school for retarded blind children meet the need? Other questions of great importance cannot be well answered without knowledge of the condition of all young blind children.

The co-operation of all Agencies for the Blind in obtaining this fuller knowledge is being asked for and will certainly be gladly given. It is likely that, after that, further investigation will be made on the condition of children of school age who are not at school. That perhaps is the next stage. It is clearly sound policy to start with the youngest.

THE EDITOR.

WAR-TIME EMPLOYMENT BULLETIN-I

THE blind, and those concerned with their welfare, may fairly congratulate themselves on the fact that during 1942 they have demonstrated the usefulness of the blind in ordinary industry in such a way that it should never again be satisfactory to classify a man as unemployable simply because he is not suitable for blind workshop employment. Some readers, who contend that the success of the War-time Employment Campaign is entirely the result of abnormal war-time conditions, may consider that this is too bold a statement, but none will disagree that, whilst everything should be done to secure placements now, an endeavour should also be made to consolidate the gains for the future. It is, for this reason, important that war-time industrial experience should be collated, that common difficulties should be discussed, and that some effort should be made to appraise the success of the campaign from a national point of view.

A War-time Employment Bulletin will therefore become a regular feature of THE NEW BEACON, and it is hoped that those agencies concerned with the development of the campaign will help to make the Bulletin as useful as possible by informing the Editor of their achievements and difficulties.

Statistics now available for England and Wales show that, since the outbreak of war, 721 blind persons have obtained war work outside the special workshops. This is certainly an understatement, for the campaign is developing so rapidly that many of the returns from which this total has been compiled are already out of date. Some agencies have made no return, and many blind persons who have obtained work for themselves may not have reported their success to the agency concerned. It seems reasonable, therefore, to assume that the actual total now exceeds 800.

The figure of 721 known employees may be itemised as follows:—

In the Northern Counties, which contain a

blind population of 26,591, war work has been found for 261 persons. This figure is taken from a return for the 30th November, 1942, and it is known that, since that date, the number of placements has increased. In this area, the Northern Counties Association for the Blind, in co-operation with the three Regional Officers of the Ministry of Labour and National Service and with local Agencies for the Blind in the area, is conducting a vigorous campaign. It might be said that industrial conditions in the North are peculiarly favourable, but the success achieved by the campaign merits high praise.

In the Southern Counties area, which contains a blind population of 35,896, a total of 278 war-time employees has been reported. The outstanding achievement in this area is that of Birmingham and district, where, as a result of the energy of the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind, more than 100 blind persons have now found work. Twenty-four placements are reported from Leicestershire, 20 from Middlesex, 13 from Essex and 13 from Hertfordshire. In the area of the L.C.C., which contains more than one-fifth of the total blind population in the Southern Region, only 26 placements are reported. So small a figure is regrettable in view of the comparatively favourable industrial possibilities of the London area.

In the Western Counties area, where there is a total blind population of 6,046, 49 placements are reported. Twenty-four of these are in Bristol, and 12 in Gloucestershire.

From Wales and Monmouthshire, which contain 5,791 blind persons, 30 placements are reported. This return was for October, 1942, and the number of placements may have increased since that date.

St. Dunstan's, which, since the outbreak of war has conducted an active employment campaign, has, through its placement department, found employment in war-time industry for 103 ex-Service men.

WHEN I REMEMBER . . . V.

By BEN PURSE.

AS we have already indicated, the period 1917 to September, 1920, was important inasmuch as grave doubts were entertained regarding the intentions of the Government in the matter of giving effect to the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee. Even before that Report was published, Ministers of the Crown were making speeches to the effect that neither Parliamentary time nor Treasury grants could be provided, and that we must wait a little longer before time and means could be provided for giving effect to the wishes of the Committee. This was all very disappointing and evoked strong resentment among the blind community, and particularly in those organisations that had taken a prominent part in the work of the Government Committee. It was soon apparent that the situation could not be met by a mere negative attitude on the part of the State, and as soon as the recommendations of the Departmental Committee became known, the signal was given for an intensified form of agitation.

A number of prominent people resolved that something must be done to quicken the pace, and the first important steps were taken by the late Sir Arthur Pearson, and through him the War Cabinet decided to inaugurate a system of grants in aid for the purpose of giving financial assistance towards the maintenance of certain essential services. This attitude did not allay the suspicion of some of the organisations for the blind, and comparisons were drawn between the militant section of the women's suffrage movement and that which was supposed to protect the interests of blind persons. The parallel, such as it was, failed in many important respects, but it was useful in that it convinced the more active members of the blind community that if they were to achieve anything that was really worth securing, they must make themselves a public nuisance. In the meantime tempers were becoming frayed and downright hostility began to manifest itself towards all and sundry who were thought to be apologists for delayed Government action. Vigorous lobbying of private members was undertaken at the House of Commons; the Government was approached time after time through the ordinary channels, but the results secured were still deemed to be unsatisfactory. Meetings were arranged at the House of Commons with groups of private members, and although they evoked

a considerable amount of sympathetic interest, the Government remained unmoved. It was then deemed advisable to adopt even more militant tactics, and the debates in the House were frequently interrupted by an organised form of opposition. Finally, 250 blind workers marched to London from a number of important centres, and they remained in town, holding meetings in every conceivable public place, and demanding immediate Government action.

The House of Commons was visited over and over again, and Members of Parliament at last realised that a volume of public opinion was steadily gathering momentum and that it could not be satisfied merely by delaying tactics.

On a certain day in April, 1920, whilst the present writer was addressing a private meeting of Members at the House of Commons, a number of blind people had gained access to the galleries and commenced not very decorously to interrupt the proceedings. They were removed in the usual way and placed in custody until the rising of the House. But a large contingent of blind persons, many of whom had not gained access to the galleries, marched to the Prime Minister's residence at 10, Downing Street, and demanded to see Mr. Lloyd George. Apparently, however, he was at that time absent on business at Geneva, but a highly placed Government official gave an undertaking that the Prime Minister immediately on his return would meet a deputation of members of the National League of the Blind. This did not satisfy the organisation, and the members marched from Downing Street to Trafalgar Square, where they organised a huge meeting and began to speak from the plinth. This was an illegal act, for no meeting must be held without authority within a mile of the House of Commons during the time that Parliament is in session. By the time the police arrived, the audience had grown to huge proportions, and the task of removing speakers from the plinth, which the police had to undertake, was by no means a congenial one. The officers of the law, however, despite much provocation and an immense amount of barracking from the crowd, performed their difficult duties with much good humour and toleration. But there are limits to human endurance, and at length they had to resort to more severe measures. The writer well remembers that after the second time of his removal from the plinth, when he was dumped unceremoniously on to the pavement below, he had no desire to make a

third attempt. Similar experiences could be recorded by many of the people who on that particular day took part in the demonstration. To be so removed by four stalwart policemen is not an experience that one cares to repeat often.

Gradually the police drew a strong cordon round the stone obelisk, and with much good-humoured banter, steadily but persistently forced the large crowd from the precincts of the Square. So that day's work, memorable in its way, came to an end.

Subsequently Mr. Lloyd George received a deputation and listened attentively to the case for legislation as it was put on behalf of the National League by the writer of this article. By some mishap, Dr. Addison, now Lord Addison, was not present. The Minister of Health had been seen travelling in the opposite direction to that which led to the House of Commons: apparently he had overlooked the fact that he was expected to make a reply. Mr. Lloyd George was evidently taken by surprise, for we imagine on this occasion he made one of the shortest speeches on record, and it was quite clear that he knew nothing of the subject apart from the statements he had heard from the deputation. His reply was kind and generous. He gave the deputation to understand that without undue delay legislation would be promoted and given effect to at the earliest possible date, certainly before the end of 1920.

Most members of the organisation were pleased with the response that had been made by the Prime Minister, though there were some, as always, who never could be satisfied with any undertaking so given, because they wanted to go far beyond the recommendations made by the Inter-Departmental Committee.

As everyone knows, the first Blind Persons Act became law in 1920, and closed an important chapter in the history of the struggle for better conditions of life and labour.

It is worth noting here that the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind appointed by the Ministry of Health in 1918, had already given effect to some of the recommendations of the Inter-Departmental Committee, through the advice which they had tendered to the Minister. A system of grants in aid had been inaugurated, as we have already stated, and the preliminary steps necessary for securing a complete register of the blind had been taken. A model scheme provided by the Bradford Institution had been adopted with certain slight modifications, and in this way the general machinery of government commenced to function. The Bradford scheme, which was largely the work of Mr. W. H. Tate and the then

Manager of the Institution, Mr. M. Priestley, had been a great success in that city for a period of ten years prior to Government action. This scheme was made possible because of the generous attitude of the old Board of Guardians. Now, however, it was given the full sanction of the law, and materially assisted local authorities throughout the country to fashion their own arrangements.

This story, related after a lapse of many years, remains vividly in the mind of the writer, and it is some consolation to know that after much hard work and many material privations, the foundations of a better way of life have been faithfully and truly laid. Whatever the future may portend is at present in the lap of the gods, but the old bad days have gone never to return.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

What is the Best Way to Read Braille ?

SIR,—Some blind people I meet read Braille with the left hand, some with the right, some with both. The question whether it should be read with the left or the right hand seems to be an individual idiosyncrasy. Very fast readers are found amongst the one-handers and the both-handers. Few very fast readers are found amongst those who become blind after educational age.

Should the new war-blinded who are mostly in the twenties be taught to read with one hand or both ?

It occurs to me that discussion in your columns from blind persons or their teachers might help us to decide. If correspondence follows this letter and shows any tendency perhaps the National Institute for the Blind would consider including at a later date in every Braille periodical a questionnaire which could subsequently be analysed and published.

I suggest that anyone who writes should mention whether he or she was blind before the educational age or after, as I think this makes a great difference to fluency.

For my part, I have for many years been reading at the rate of a page of interpoint in five minutes, and have not had the time or the skill to increase my speed beyond this point. I read with my right forefinger. Can anyone indicate how I may get more speed ? I was blinded at the age of eighteen years, and am now forty-five.

Yours, etc.,

IAN FRASER,
Chairman, St. Dunstan's.

OBITUARY

We much regret to announce the death of:—

Mrs. Katherine Knapp, J.P., after a short illness, at Denham, Bucks, on December 29th, 1942. Her life of devotion to the public had a touching continuity with that of her husband, Mr. John Knapp, of Linford Hall, County Alderman of Buckinghamshire, who died some twenty years ago. Sharing his profound local patriotism, but choosing for herself those activities which commended themselves to her practical common sense as particularly within her capacity, she gave herself unsparingly to the work of the County and, at the time of her death, she was Chairman of the County Voluntary Committee for Mental Deficiency and of the Voluntary Association for the Blind; President of the County Midwives' Association and a co-opted member of the Public Health, Education and Public Assistance Committees of the Bucks County Council. She was a member of the Magistrates' Bench at Beaconsfield and Chairman of the Juvenile Court there, and she was also a Governor of the Royal Bucks Hospital and a member of the Council and Committees of the National Society for Epileptics. Through her interest in the Bucks Association for the Blind, she became a member of the Union of Counties Associations for the Blind, and in 1931 she was appointed to the Council of the National Institute for the Blind. In November, 1936, she was elected Chairman of the Institute's Homes Sub-Committee, and in October, 1938, Chairman of its General Purposes Committee, both of which offices she retained until her death. On the formation of the Southern Regional Association for the Blind in 1938 she was appointed to its Council as representing the Bucks Association for the Blind.

The first part of the Funeral Service was held at Denham Church on January 1st. The church was filled by representatives of organisations in the County and her friends from Denham. The National Institute was represented by Mr. H. J. Wagg, Vice-Chairman of the Council; Mr. W. McG. Eagar, Secretary-General, and Mr. Devine, Mr. Hayward and Mrs. Slatcher, representing the Institute's Homes. Miss V. Spenser-Wilkinson represented the Southern Regional Association for the Blind; Mr. H. H. Yea, the Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind, and Mr. G. A. C. Prestion, the National Society for Epileptics.

Mr. Eagar writes: "It seems no less in-

credible than disastrous that Mrs. Knapp should be dead. She was so active, so indefatigable. She never gave herself a holiday, or paid any attention to her own convenience, comfort or health. If she had been willing to give in when, for once, she was ill, she might still be with us. We at the N.I.B. made heavy calls on her; she always responded helpfully and promptly, despite her innumerable other engagements. Somehow she made it possible to attend whenever she was wanted for Committee Meetings and Sub-Committees, for consultations, interviews, discussions on questions of policy and to give decisions as and when they were required. She was well-nigh the perfect Chairman, brisk, firm, humorous and fair; quick to see a relevant point, prompt to stop diversion from the matter at issue, bringing the Committee to a common mind, not necessarily her own, and always seeking a clear decision which would result in practical action. We owe her a great debt. She could criticise and rebuke when occasion arose, but she was scrupulous to be just. The excellence of her chairmanship at meetings was largely due to the infinite trouble she took to know the business before the Committee began. She is missed, mourned and gratefully remembered by her colleagues on the Council and on our Committees; by the staff at Headquarters and Branches, whom she treated so generously and supported with such loyalty; and not least by the Matrons and residents of the Homes in all parts of the country."

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Court Grange School Musical Successes.—The blind children at Court Grange School have again gained excellent results in the recent examinations in Pianoforte of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, London. Of nine entries, all were successful, and six credits were awarded. Their teacher, Mr. B. Slee, L.R.A.M., is himself blind. Details are:—

Betty Cross	..	..	Preliminary	..	Pass
Maisie Brown	..	..	Grade 1	..	Credit
Veronica Young	..	..	Grade 1	..	Pass
Ronald Drum	..	..	Grade 3	..	Credit
Anthony Robins	..	..	Grade 3	..	Credit
Lewis Pelham	..	..	Grade 4	..	Credit
Trevor Allison	..	..	Grade 5	..	Credit
Edward Whatford	..	..	Grade 6	..	Credit
Edward Whatford	..	..	Grade 4 Theory	..	Pass

A Blind, Deaf and Crippled Knitter.—Miss Olive Tilton, of Hamilton Terrace, Otley, who is

blind and deaf, and has to be carried about in an invalid chair as she cannot walk, has knitted 40 pullovers for Red Cross and St. John Central Hospital Supply Service since last March.

Blind Gardener's Certificate.—Mr. A. J. Wilson, of Enfield, has received a Ministry of Agriculture certificate of merit for his garden.

Blind Collector of War Savings Has Splendid Results.—Mrs. Exham, a Frenchwoman who married an Englishman now dead, is the blind collector of National Savings for Newton Harcourt and Wistow, Leicestershire. These villages have only 35 cottages between them.

In 1940 Mrs. Exham called a meeting to discuss the desirability of starting a savings group, but only about half a dozen people attended, and those present said it would be useless to try to form an organisation. So she decided to do the collecting herself, and in the first week stamps to the value of £1. 13s. were sold. Since then she has gone out with her white stick every Monday, and now collects about £15 weekly.

Up to the present the villagers have subscribed £3,622 in small savings for the war effort.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Braille Mathematical Notation

The American Printing House for the Blind, 1839, Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, Ky., U.S.A., has published a second American revision of the "Braille Mathematical Notation" (ink-print, \$1.75; Braille, \$2.50). It is a revision of the code originally designed by Mr. H. M. Taylor, and is intended to bring mathematics into line with Standard English Braille, and also to meet the demands of modern mathematical texts; it does not contradict the revision in use in the States since 1920, but merely makes certain modifications in the interests of S.E.B. Among its outstanding features are:—

The introduction of mathematical symbols as far as possible in the order of their introduction in arithmetic, algebra, etc.; the expansion of the format to increase ease of identification of the symbols and the inclusion of a comprehensive table of contents; the inclusion in the ink-print edition of Braille page numbers, for the convenience of sighted teachers; additional illustrations of usage of the symbols and an increased list of abbreviations; a complete list of Greek letters is given.

A College Magazine

Chorleywood College has just celebrated its coming of age and it is therefore fitting that a large part of the magazine for 1941-2 should be devoted to a record of what past pupils are doing. It is one which would surely compare favourably with that of any other secondary school for girls, in spite of the fact that practically all Chorleywood old girls suffer from seriously impaired vision and many from blindness. We read of many teachers; some in nursery schools, some in schools for the blind and others in high schools; of hospital nurses and of masseuses; of workers in dairy farm, on the land and in the garden; of office workers, proof-readers, college students and social workers; and of a multitude of those valuable but unspectacular war-workers who do household chores, cope with rationing and cooking for the family, stand in shopping queues, and in their rare leisure moments knit for the Forces.

School societies flourish in spite of war-time; there have been poetry readings, lectures, plays, folk-dancing, visits to the Denham Film Studios and to the Amersham Repertory, and a Red Cross sale which realised £110. Original contributions in prose and verse by present girls are included in the magazine.

REVIEWS of REPORTS

National Institute for the Blind.—It is extraordinarily difficult for an Annual Report to present its subject from a new angle, and the writer of the National Institute's Report for 1941-42 is therefore to be congratulated on his use of a novel device. He invites the reader to imagine himself looking down on England and Wales as an expanse suffused with light, but with more than 74,000 dark spots representing her blind population. Towards these dark spots, and emanating from the National Institute's headquarters, are rivers and canals, streams and pools of light, these rivers and streams being Braille and Moon publications, apparatus and appliances, wireless, Homes, and so on, through all the Institute's activities. The metaphor is cunningly worked out, and the Report then goes on to give details of various branches of the work done.

We read of blind babies in the Sunshine Home in Northumberland who have "become country-

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances :		s.	d.
18948	Addinsell, R. Hold Your Hats On! Song Fox-Trot	0	6
18949	Berlin, I. Be Careful, It's My Heart, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
18950	Sherwin, M. The Twilight Waltz, Song- Waltz	0	6
18951	Wayne, M. South Wind, Song Fox- Trot	0	6

BRAILLE BOOKS.

Miscellaneous :

First Supplementary List of Music and Music Literature Embossed in Braille, January, 1941. Catalogue No. 13537. 2d. net.

Forthcoming Panda.

No. 60. **Whereas I was Blind**, by Lt.-Col. Sir Ian Fraser, M.P. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

This extremely interesting autobiography by the Chairman of St. Dunstan's touches on many aspects of blind welfare and shows how a blind man has been able to overcome his handicap. Chapters dealing with Sir Ian's work as a Member of Parliament, and as a leading authority on Broadcasting, form an interesting supplement to his survey of the work of St. Dunstan's.

World Digest.

The National Institute for the Blind is now in a position to accept a limited number of new annual subscriptions to the Braille edition of World Digest. The new subscriptions will begin with the January, 1943, issue. The annual subscription is 12s. post free, payable in advance, and application should be made at once.

MOON BOOKS.

4627-4631	Frenchman's Creek, by Daphne du Maurier. 5 vols. (Limited Edition.)
4647	The Lost Treasure of the Incas, by A. J. Rees. 1s. 6d.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

Theology :		Vols.
Fisher, A. S. T. (ed.)	An Anthology of Prayers compiled for use in school and home ..	2
Lewis, C. S.	The Screwtape Letters ..	2
Social and Political :		
Benes, Edouard.	Democracy To-day and To-morrow	3
Schuster, Sir George.	India and Democracy ..	7
Stapledon, Olaf.	Beyond the 'Isms ..	2
Science :		
Sullivan, J. W. N.	Limitations of Science ..	2
Literature :		
Auden, W. H.	Selected Poems	1

mindful," of members of the London Auxiliary Fire Service who make toys (so hard to come by in these days) for the babies, of the children at East Grinstead who have made friends with a Canadian regiment. We are told how the roll of boys at Worcester College has reached a new record, and how they have painted the walls of their chapel as a bit of war-work. We learn that Domestic Science has been added to the number of subjects taken at Chorleywood College for School Certificate examinations. That exceptionally good work in music has been done at Court Grange School for Retarded Blind Children, where two distinctions and six credits have been gained in external music examinations. That the war "has not hindered our Massage services; it has inspired them," and that 34 hospital and clinic posts were secured during the year, and 15 masseurs and masseuses established in private practice. That the Students' Library has added 600 new volumes to its shelves during the year, a figure nearly up to pre-war standards. That the Talking Books Library now comprises over 400 titles. That the Panda series of short works on current topics and light fiction continues to flourish, and that reading circles have been formed to enable one book to do the work of six. That consignments of apparatus have been sent to the British Red Cross Society for blinded prisoners. And that residents at Long Meadow, the National Institute's Home of Recovery, sold articles made by themselves in their handicraft room and gave the proceeds to buy toys for blind babies.

As in other years, the Report relies upon photography as much as upon the printed word to tell its story, and in this connection makes an appeal to the sympathy and imagination of its readers which cannot be gainsaid. The pictures of residents in the Homes of Recovery for the War Blinded and of babies in the Sunshine Homes stress the happiness and normality of the blind in a remarkable way.

Buckinghamshire Association for the Blind.—

The Report for 1941-42 shows that in spite of war-time difficulties of transport, which made the travelling of blind people to clubs and flower shows difficult, competitions "at home" were held and prizes given for the best vegetables. In the previous year's Report donations were shown to have increased by 30 per cent., and once again a new record has been achieved. The National Institute retains 25 per cent. of money collected for administrative purposes, but flag days alone have yielded £1,450 and miscellaneous collections and entertainments more than another £700. Over £5,100 has been spent on grants to blind persons.

German :	<i>Vols.</i>
Hoffmann, E. T. A. Der Goldene Topf ..	3
Hugo. German Grammar Simplified ..	2
Spanish :	
Collins. Spanish-English, English-Spanish Dictionary ..	11
Biography :	
Elvin, Lionel. Men of America ..	3
Gosse, Philip. Squire of Walton Hall: Life of Charles Waterton ..	5
Mahan, A. T. Life of Nelson ..	4
Webb, Beatrice. My Apprenticeship ..	9
Miscellaneous :	
Thomas, Howard (ed.). Brains Trust Book ..	2
Treves, Sir Frederick. The Elephant Man and other Reminiscences ..	2

REPAIRS TO BRAILLE WATCHES.

The National Institute for the Blind regrets that owing to an accumulation of repair jobs and the shortage of labour in the watch repair service, it will be unable to deal with fresh applications for repairs to watches during the next two months. People are therefore requested not to send watches for repair until further notice unless they have been quite unable to get repairs done locally.

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES : 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

REQUIRED. Harrison Round Machines and/or accessories. Particulars to Secretary, Royal Midland Institution for the Blind, Chaucer Street, Nottingham.

WANTED : URGENTLY.—Stainsby-Wayne Braille Writing Machine, in good working order. Hire or Purchase.—Miss N. E. Webb, Burford, Elmstead Road, West Byfleet, Surrey.

UNWANTED TALKING BOOK MACHINES.

The National Institute for the Blind wishes to remind owners of Talking Books that machines no longer required should be returned to the Institute, which will pay the best possible cash price for them. Some owners no longer requiring machines have given them away or sold them privately, but such practice is not fair to the very long waiting list of applicants to whom the Institute allocates machines in proper order. War-time conditions make it increasingly difficult to obtain new machines, and the Institute begs all users to co-operate with it in securing fair distribution.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF BURY.

Blind Persons Act Committee.

APPOINTMENT OF SIGHTED HOME TEACHER AND VISITOR (WOMAN).

Applications are invited for the above position.

Applicants should possess a Certificate of Training for this kind of post.

Salary scale : £156 per annum, rising by increments of £13 per annum to a maximum of £208 per annum. Experience will be taken into account in fixing the commencing salary.

For form of application and particulars apply, enclosing a stamped-addressed envelope, to the undersigned.

M. TOMLINSON,
Education Offices, Bury. Executive Officer.

N.I.B. GIFT TOKENS.

The stock of Gift Tokens, until now obtainable from the National Institute for the Blind, is exhausted, and owing to war conditions will not at present be replenished. When normal conditions return the National Institute hopes to re-issue Gift Tokens for the convenience of its customers.

VACANCIES IN HOMES, ETC.

31st December, 1942.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies.
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland	—
Guest House for Blind Women, Leamington	—
Wavertree House, Hove	—
The Haven, Scarborough	—
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea	1
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring	4
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay	3
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth	4

SWITCH OFF !

Attractive Gummed Labels bearing the words "Switch off! Light, like sight, is precious," beneath an heraldic lion, may be obtained from the National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, W.1, price 3d. a dozen.

EXPERIENCED FOREWOMAN required immediately for evacuation workshop in Exeter, nine blind persons employed on Dubied hand flat M/Cs. Write fully, stating age, experience and salary required, to : Royal Society for the Blind, 105, Salusbury Road, N.W.6.

HOME TEACHERS' EXAMINATION, 1943.—Those anxious to qualify for the College of Teachers' Certificate are invited to apply for details of a Postal Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham R.I. for the Blind, Harborne, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

EXPERIENCED MAN REQUIRED AS HEAD OF AN INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND OVERSEAS.

The institution is state-aided, well staffed, with an enrolment of 40 blind persons and many waiting admission when there is accommodation. It is of a missionary nature, controlled by an inter-denominational committee elected by subscribers, with government representatives. Applicants must be experienced in workshop management and hostel supervision, with organising ability, prepared to develop what may easily become a leading institution in a large field. Adequate salary, with small house, situated in most beautiful district in one of the healthiest countries in the world. Present occupant (founder of the institution) is thinking of resigning at the end of 1943 or earlier if suitable successor found. Reply in first place to the Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

The New BEACON

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 314.

FEBRUARY 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.) 3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.

HINTS TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE

By TRITONE

THESE words are addressed more particularly to those whom I may term newly entered into the Brotherhood of the Dark. None the less, there are hints for those who will live or work with them.

First of all, remember that the old expression "hopelessly blind" is hopelessly out of date.

Here goes then. First for you, my brothers. Most of you will enter upon a course of training which will enable you to adapt yourselves to the new conditions. I do not propose to trespass on this ground. After many decades of sighted life and a sudden change, I found certain things of infinite help; patience—lots of this; a cultivation of memory; imagination and the sense of order. You will be amazed at their rapid growth which will come with perseverance.

Fortunately I am blessed with a good memory; even so, constant practice has improved it. I have recently revisited a strip of wild sea cliff after a lapse of 30 years and was able to direct my two sighted companions.

Here comes my second point, imagination. I could visualise the whole scene as I had known it, including the effect which the weather and light of that particular day would create. Twice only was I caught out by alterations which had been made in two places on our long coastwise walk, since I had last trodden that old rugged coastguard path.

So, hang on to your memories of all goodly and pleasant things both of town and country and keep them bright and sharp. If you visit new and strange places with sighted companions, encourage them to describe these in detail, try to visualise their description and then pin it down in your memory. Do the same with new things that you touch and handle: you will soon find out how much your finger-tips will tell you.

Not an hour ago I was handling some beautiful old china. I shall know those pieces if ever I meet them again.

In previous articles I have detailed the dodges I used to add to my independence in getting about my house and garden. In this, as in all the ordinary daily round, order, memory and imaginative visualisation play their part.

Are you of a tidy or orderly disposition? I was not, but I have learnt to be.

Find, by trial and error, the best place in which to keep everything you have and everything you use. Let us begin the day. Slippers always where you can stoop and pick them up without bumping your head, dressing-gown hanging handy. Do you want to do a few "jerks"? Be sure that there is always that clear space where you can do them without fear of bruised knuckles or stubbed toes. Brushes, combs and other like things should be in their appointed places on your dressing-table or bathroom shelf, and the same with shaving tackle and soap.

Here is a little anecdote. I had a bachelor uncle—before the days of safety razors this—who always had his shaving mirror hung on the same spot on the wall. When he was about fifty the mirror fell and was broken. He never renewed it, but still stood and looked at the wallpaper and shaved himself as cleanly as ever to the end of his days. Force of habit!

Treat your clothes in the same way. Ties here, collars there, handkerchiefs and socks in due order, shirts in this drawer, unders and pyjamas over yonder. Use them in rotation and do the same with your shoes. Try not to be impatient and irritated if those around you, whose only desire is to help, sometimes forget and upset your ordered neatness.

And you, among whom the blind one lives. I know how much you sympathise and think you can understand. I used to think so in the days when I could see, but the most myopic among you cannot really know what it feels like, so be patient with occasional spurts of baffled irritation from someone doing an uphill climb to independence.

Try to remember when you put back the returned laundry, or hang up the changed suit; don't alter his arrangement. Hat, cap, overcoat, raincoat, umbrella, stick; always the same pegs and the same place. When you needs must move the furniture, put it back carefully. If you want to make a permanent change in its position, wait till he can help you to do it, that will help him to remember. Keep your cherished china and other fragile things on high shelves. They will look just as charming. See that dust-pan, vacuum cleaner, coal hod, or other things that rattle and bang are not left in the fairway. A long-handled broom, head downwards, if trodden on can make the handle fly out with unpleasant results. Even if no physical damage is done, such accidents as knocking over something fragile when feeling for something else, or stumbling into anything unexpected startles, lessens the confidence with which the blind member of your family strides about, makes

him creep, shuffle and fumble and a backslider on that uphill road.

You wouldn't do it for worlds. Of course, you wouldn't, but you were busy, preoccupied, tired—and you had forgotten. But your forgetting may make him come up with a jerk against the very thing he has been trying to overcome. Never leave a door half or a little open, and if you must warn him, do it in time and do it quietly. Never shout, however scared for him you may be.

Another word to you all, and I wish this could reach an even wider public. Carry your white stick and do all you can to acquaint the hurrying, bustling throng, among whom some of us must walk, with its significance. Don't be shy of advertising your condition; some of you, like the writer, may give little outward sign of blindness. People who through carelessness, or suddenly emerging from a doorway, collide with you, feel perfectly beastly about it when they realise what they've done. You will find everyone you meet when you are out full of kindness and anxiety to help.

Experience has taught me that transport workers, as well as fellow travellers, will vie with one another in caring for your safety and convenience, when they realise your need. The white stick is your passport.

I have an old and valued friend in the shape of a walking stick, enamelled white, periodically freshened up with another coat.

The more of us who use such sticks and help to educate the general public, the fewer harassed shoppers, pram-pushing mothers, hurrying Service men and women and the rest, will make collision with us and blushing apology. So spare their feelings.

To you who do welfare work among the blind, the writer would say, You, too, can help greatly in educating the public in this matter.

A special word to such of the new entrants who may be either of my own profession or amateurs in the art of music, or musically inclined. Try as soon as possible to pick up things where you left off. In my youthful days a European Royal Duke was a frequent visitor to London. He was a most gifted violinist and had lost his sight. Yet he played in string quartet and in other chamber works, sometimes leading; in concertos with the orchestra and in sonatas and other solo pieces with piano. His repertory was by no means limited to the classics. He memorised new works which were played to him phrase by phrase by a sighted violinist.

The great Catalan 'cellist, Casals, invariably played with closed eyes. In my own sighted

days I have played the organ and the piano in the dark for hours, practising whole recital programmes. If you don't play an instrument you can sing. Most of us have a voice of some kind which will improve with use. Join a quartet party or a choir. You can learn and memorise both music and words.

The grandfather of the present gifted Goossens generation raised and conducted a large amateur male voice choir. At their final rehearsals, as at the following concerts, not a score was to be seen.

If you are engaged in brain work, cultivate a handicraft hobby and vice versa. Your radio and your gramophone will be your indispensable inanimate friends, a constant source of interest, pleasure, and education.

Have you a bent towards dramatic composition or literary work in prose or verse? Then you can dictate, as I am doing now, or learn to work a typewriter. In this, as in other matters, nature gives compensation and your senses of hearing and touch will gradually grow more acute, analytic, and selective with thoughtful practice, as will your mental faculties. But if your bent, professional or amateur, is toward musical composition, then you will have to find someone who can take down your tunes at your dictation, and, provided they have a knowledge of musical notation themselves, that is all you will need, except unlimited patience. It is a slow process, but to the composer it is worth it. You can start quite simply and

gradually accustom both yourself and your helpful friend to higher flights.

Have you an inclination toward the plastic art? You can learn to model in clay, or even to make simple pottery as a hobby, or you can learn to spin and weave. The learning of a new handicraft, or the education in the resumption of a former one as a means of livelihood is outside the scope of this article, nor is the writer competent to speak thereon, but carpentry and joinery as a hobby are still possible. So, too, is wood-carving, or the combination of this and "poker work" which was practised in the 16th and 17th centuries. It can all be done by touch and one or two simple gadgets added to your tool box.

Last tip of all. Get someone to read to you Sir Ian Fraser's recently published book. Comment from the present writer, other than that it should be the *vade mecum* of the blind, of those who live with them and all who are interested in their welfare, is superfluous.

In taking my leave of you, let me express the hope that these rather random hints may help you to the happiness and ease I have found. To others more worthy and expert is the great and welcome task of making you once more useful members of the community, with almost complete independence restored, and with it confidence and pride in your achievements and the joy that comes with them.

HOME NEWS

Relieving Officers and Domiciliary Assistance.

—In the House of Commons recently, Mr. E. Brown, asked by Mr. Messer whether he would discontinue the use of relieving officers for investigating the circumstances of applicants for blind domiciliary assistance and the payment of grants, stated that the arrangements for investigating the circumstances of the blind and for the payment of financial assistance to them do not require approval. He has no power to give directions in the matter to the local authorities concerned, but the use of relieving officers for these purposes does not imply that the assistance given is given as poor relief.

Essex Launches Apartments for the Blind Scheme.—The Essex County Association for the Blind has lately embarked on a new venture in the Leytonstone District, where there has been for some time past a considerable demand for

comfortable unfurnished rooms for blind people.

A large house with a pleasant garden, suitable for this purpose, has now come into the market and has been rented by the Association. A strong local committee kindly undertook to clean and decorate the premises, and many gifts have been received of furniture, bedding, etc. In addition to an open grate a small gas cooker is provided in all rooms, which are let to blind women, who furnish them according to their own taste and even to their own "colour scheme." A large sitting room—with piano—is set aside for club purposes and for communal meals on special occasions. A caretaker lives on the premises and renders any help necessary, and the hostel is visited daily by the local Home Teacher.

After allowing for the initial capital outlay, the Association is hoping that the scheme will be self-supporting.

Braille Letters from Blinded Prisoners of War.—The first batch of letters in Braille from blind British prisoners of war in Germany has reached the Red Cross and St. John Invalid Comforts Section. One writer says he is writing a book, "The Story of a Blind Prisoner of War."

Blind Student on International Unity.—At the first national conference last month of the Scottish National Union of Students, held at Edinburgh, Mr. Martin Milligan, a blind student of Edinburgh University and Balliol College, in a general discussion on international affairs, said that the growing feeling of international unity was one of the best hopes for the future of the world, and through their various organisations students could help to further that unity of all nations.

Blind Man's Gift to the Blind.—Mr. John F. Lodge, a talented blind musician of Llanvair Discoed, has presented to the Newport Association for the Blind a Canadian two-manual pedal reed organ for use at the Headquarters of the Association, "Ffrwd Vale," 199, Chepstow Road, Newport, and in particular for the use of the residents of the Hostel.

In making the gift, Mr. Lodge said he did so in the hope that those who might use it would derive as much pleasure from it as he had done, and that it was a mark of appreciation for kindnesses shown to him and to his late wife. It will be remembered that Mrs. Lodge, an expert in the art of artificial flower making, had the honour, just before she died, of having a bouquet of artificial flowers accepted by Her Majesty Queen Mary.

Recitals of Music at the Royal Normal College.—A series of recitals by well-known concert

artists is being made available to students of the Royal Normal College, through the generosity of Gardner's Trust for the Blind. These "Gardner's Trust Recitals" will make an important contribution to the musical education of the College as well as to its social life.

During the Christmas Term the College enjoyed a special recital by Irene Scharrer, and a song recital by Millicent Ward. For the present term recitals have been arranged, under the newly announced scheme, by Ethel de Gomez and Hilda Dederich, the British String Quartet and by Miriam Licette.

No. 1,000 of "The Moon Newspaper."—On the 25th February the one thousandth issue of *The Moon Newspaper* will be published. No. 1 was issued on 2nd January, 1924, and since then this weekly newspaper in Moon type has provided hundreds of elderly blind readers in this country and in the United States with a concise summary of world news in an embossed type easily learnt. When the newspaper was established, it was widely advertised as "the smallest newspaper in the world"—not in bulk but in the number of words—and a copy of the first issue reproduced in letterpress, showing the arrangement of the summary, created considerable interest in the newspaper press here and in America.

N.I.B. Liverpool Branch Office.—The Liverpool Branch Office of the National Institute for the Blind, which after its premises had been damaged in an air raid was temporarily removed to Halewood Road, Gatacre, will be reopened in the city on 22nd February. Its address will be 87, Lord Street, Liverpool, 2.

REPORT OF THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON THE REHABILITATION AND RESETTLEMENT OF DISABLED PERSONS

IN a note at the end of the article *Placement and the National Institute for the Blind* which appeared in our last issue, reference was made to this Report, which can be obtained from H.M. Stationery Office, price 9d. net.

Its conclusions are as follows:—

- (a) That rehabilitation is a continuous process, partly medical and partly social or industrial.
- (b) That close co-operation between the Health and Industrial services is essential throughout.
- (c) That continuity of the service is essential on the industrial side. It should begin in hospital, continue throughout the

post-hospital stages and only end when resettlement is complete.

- (d) That ordinary employment is the ideal to be aimed at, with the co-operation of employers, workpeople, health services and responsible Government departments, but that in addition, a certain amount of sheltered employment will be required.

The main recommendations of the Committee, in addition to those dealing with medical and post-hospital rehabilitation, may be summed up thus:—

1. The scheme should be open to all disabled persons, and not merely those disabled through the war.

2. Legislation should be enacted (a) introducing a quota of disabled persons and imposing upon employers who do not satisfy the quota of a restriction on the engagement of other workers ; (b) scheduling certain occupations for disabled persons, and (c) setting up a register of the disabled. A definition of disablement should be drawn up, covering "disablements of all kinds and from all causes including those arising at birth."
3. The responsibility for administering the resettlement scheme should rest with the Ministry of Labour and National Service, assisted by local Committees.
4. Employment for the more severely disabled should be provided under sheltered conditions, partly by voluntary undertakings assisted by grants and partly by a public corporation set up for the purpose.
5. The Ministry of Labour and National Service should undertake a survey of occupations suitable to special forms of disablement, and also of adjustment of tools and appliances likely to be required.

Paragraphs 93 to 98 of the Report deal specifically with the blind and begin by setting out the present position with regard to training and employment. "The Committee consider that there is room for improvement in respect of training, and that the general duty of the Local Education Authorities should be converted into a specific obligation to provide, or to secure the provision of, vocational training for all blind persons for whom such provision

is required and is not otherwise obtainable." Mention is made of the difficulties that arise as a result of the two definitions of blindness (educational and industrial) and the Committee considered the proposal that the scope of the Blind Persons Act should be extended to cover the partially sighted, but did not recommend it, on the ground that the needs of this class can be met by the existing powers of Local Education Authorities and the proposals of the Inter-departmental Committee itself.

After setting out the function of St. Dunstan's and the work of the National Institute for the Blind in its Homes of Recovery for the blinded civilian, a further paragraph deals with placement of the blinded in "sighted" industries, and states that already encouraging results have been achieved. "The Committee hope that these measures will be developed to the fullest extent—not merely because of their value to the war effort, but also as a contribution to the solution of the blind employment problem." It recognises, however, that the need for sheltered employment must still remain, and considers that action in this direction requires the imposition upon Local Authorities "of a more clearly defined duty than exists at present." It recommends that a scheme should be worked out to include the amendment of existing legislation on the lines suggested for the employment of the severely disabled (employment under sheltered conditions by voluntary undertakings assisted by grants, together with special centres administered by a public corporation set up for the purpose and financed by the appropriate Government Department).

CORRESPONDENCE

Homes for the Blind.

To the Editor.

SIR,—Referring to the article on this subject in the February issue of THE NEW BEACON, my experience as a Matron has proved to me that blind people are happier and more contented with other blind people than with sighted people. They feel their handicap less, and as they have to do more for themselves, they become more and more independent and retain their personality, also gaining confidence from the more experienced.

I believe in Mixed Homes ; they provide a much more natural way of living, necessitating ordinary restrictions and courtesies together

with a broader point of view for women and a more careful, softer life for the men.

Large Homes are better than several small ones. To run a large Home is little more costly comparatively than to run a small Home, the guests are less likely to quarrel seriously, the life is bigger mentally, there is much more fun and cheerfulness. One gloomy guest can infect a small number with gloom, but, in a larger crowd, the gloom is lost or "ragged out."

Essential rooms for reception and day are : Common Lounge, Smoke Lounge, Quiet Lounge and a small room where the guests can talk privately to their friends, etc.

Residential Homes would benefit greatly by handicrafts. Followed by a sale of the goods made, they create a keen interest, and this has been proved by those of the National Institute's Homes where handicrafts schemes are working.

For the sleeping accommodation, generally, Cubicles or Dormitories are preferable; so many of the blind people are not young and active, and it does not seem quite safe to shut them in a room alone for hours unless there is a Night Attendant on duty. In Cubicles or Dormitories there is usually someone who can ring or find Nurse or Matron in case of illness, etc. There is, however, always the difficulty of "snorers" and this is a real trial, as people cannot be happy or well with continually disturbed nights.

The Blind-Deaf are certainly happier in their own atmosphere. In Homes not specifically for them, there have been sad days when they have been left quite alone, the staff very busy, and some of the guests only can use the hand manual. Hence, the tragedy.

Homes should be run with as few rules as possible and only essential restrictions. Good washing and bathing accommodation is greatly appreciated. Good food should be punctually served and, as far as reasonable, "The freedom of the Home should be conferred on each guest."

Yours, etc.,

(Miss) E. M. SWANN,

Matron, Fairlawn, Totteridge

(formerly Matron at Bannow, St. Leonards).

To the Editor.

SIR,—I believe the present demand for more Homes for the Blind is created because the State offers its aged citizens no kindlier alternative to the Public Institution. While organised "Homes" have specific uses they cannot provide for the basic needs of the majority, and the whole problem of age and infirmity should be considered nationally before deciding the number of specialised Homes required, and to whom the responsibility should be given.

If Homes continue to reject as potential inmates all who have physical illness, then surely the percentage of eligible applicants who are totally blind and totally helpless is small. The present overflow of applications is probably from people whose advancing years have partially incapacitated them, who finding war conditions too strenuous have been persuaded to seek reluctant sanctuary in a Home. Their real need is similar to that of the sighted aged—specialised private accommodation. Given tiny flatlets with amenities

at *moderate* rent, a resident warden to watch their interests, provide meals as and when requested, arrange for cleaning, yet without unduly interfering with their privacy, the vast majority of old people will end their days in independent content.

Until the State recognises that aged people have legitimate needs additional to financial assistance, harassed welfare workers will continue to plead for more "Homes" for their old people, while realising only too well that (1) Homes are dreaded almost as much as the Institution. (2) Old people after a full life of home family and working independence, prefer to live alone in back rooms in appalling conditions rather than sacrifice their beloved liberty. (3) Admission to a Home robs them of domestic duties, "pottering about" and management of their own incomes, and so destroys the only occupational happiness left to age. (4) Blind people live more normally amongst the sighted unless they have developed the unattractive "blind complex." (5) Blind people have urgent need of privacy in familiar surroundings if they are to retain any freedom in age.

The development of the flatlet system by the State would fill the requirements of the majority of blind, old and young, and thus leave the provision of Homes for those who lack initiative, prefer community life or are quite helpless. It would also ease the burden on young people, many who now sacrifice their happiness in service to old and infirm relatives, yet refuse to have them "sent away into a Home."

Yours truly,

A. K.

To the Editor.

SIR,—The whole subject of Homes for the Blind has been so ably and impartially reviewed in the excellent article in last month's NEW BEACON, that it only remains for me to emphasise the points which I have so frequently urged before the Institute's Homes Committee.

My first point is to stress the desirability of Homes being provided for the aged blind. If one wishes to know what are some of the chief requirements in the Blind World, the opinion of Home Teachers should be sought. These teachers visit each blind person in their district once in a month, and know better than anybody what is most wanted, and they will all agree that aged blind people have a horror of ending in a Public Institution. Some of them are educated and are not happy in the society of

the "down and outs." Some of them have a little private means and fret at the restrictions in a Public Institution, such as not being allowed to use their own watches, their own hot-water bottles, or their own eiderdowns, if cold, while the discipline which is necessary in such Institutions is to them a hardship. I have known cases of blind people of the poorest type who have actually improved considerably in health and happiness when moved into an Institution, but there is a percentage of blind inmates now in Public Institutions who would be far happier in Homes for the Blind.

The National Institute cannot do everything. It must put first things first, and at the moment there is a pressing need for an additional Home for the Deaf-Blind. Secondly, the Homes Committee considers it essential to have a spare building ready in case another of their Homes for the Blind is bombed. Thirdly, it feels that as, owing to the scarcity of available trained and domestic staff, which in existing Homes has been reduced to 60 per cent. of its usual complement, it cannot embark on further commitments during the war. I pointed out to the Committee that in spite of these difficulties the Essex County Association for the Blind had actually started two new Homes within the past year (though not at Colchester), under the chairmanship of Mrs. Green, who can be most heartily congratulated on this fine piece of work.

The Essex County Association was offered a large house for the duration of the war by a wealthy and beneficent donor, a Mrs. Fielden, since deceased, and it now contains fifteen women whose average age is over 70 years. Two of them are diabetics, one a cripple, and one has fits. These are the type of people who would not be welcome in our National Holiday Homes, and they are very happy.

The other Home started by the Essex County Association is at Leytonstone, which is intended to pay its way. This Home caters for the blind who have just a little money of their own, and can afford to pay rent from seven to twelve shillings a week, put in their own furniture, and mess in a common room. They are able bodied, and some can cook in their own room on a gas ring.

I do not think we can expect the County Councils to provide this sort of Home under their statutory obligations, and we can hardly expect the National Institute to embark on new ventures until prior needs are satisfied and until the war is over, but I would urge voluntary associations to follow the example of the Essex County Association if an oppor-

tunity occurs, and I would add one further word, and that is, if the desire exists, it is astonishing how often a laudable one is gratified in unexpected ways.

Yours, etc.
(Captain) V. M. DEANE.

To the Editor.

SIR,—Our greatest difficulty for years has been to find suitable accommodation for blind persons. There is nothing between expensive homes and the P.L.I. where superior persons should not be sent. Our Public Assistance Officer is always asking me not to send blind persons to the P.L.I., but to relieve the beds for the old and infirm, especially those who are senile and bedridden and have no one to care for them.

I consider every Association or County Council should have and maintain a Home which could in time be self-supporting. I rather favour the Almshouse style, with a resident nurse and a porter to do heavy work, such as getting in coals, etc.

A room for recreation is a great boon, but there should not be a wireless set in this room, as some do not care for the wireless. The residents could have sets in their own apartments. These should be single rooms and double rooms for married couples.

The Home should not be too far away from the village or church, and there should be plenty of airy rooms, room for hobbies, and a large garden.

Young persons should not be put in a home among old people or *vice versa*.

Permanent homes are needed much more than Holiday Homes, and more Homes are urgently needed for Blind, Mentally Defective children and Deaf-Blind men and women.

Keep officialism out as much as possible.

Yours, etc.,
D. R. SPOONER,
*Blind Welfare Officer, East
Suffolk County Council.*

Croydon Blind War Workers.

To the Editor.

SIR,—It may interest your readers to know that we have been enabled to place two men and three women on our Register in war work. This represents just over 1 per cent. of our registered blind persons.

Yours, etc.,
A. E. HARRIS,
*Secretary,
Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind.*

Registration of the Blind.

To the Editor.

SIR,—Your articles in the November and January issues of THE NEW BEACON are most interesting.

I gathered from the Conference of Home Teachers at Birmingham last year that Registration is carried out very differently in different places. There will never be anything approaching a complete list of the blind until the medical profession reports blindness when it occurs. It is impossible for Home Teachers to discover every case.

I have two lists of people to visit: The Registered Blind, meaning those for whom my Association holds a Certificate of Blindness, and the "Partially Sighted," i.e., 1. Those blind people for whom the Association does not hold a Certificate of Blindness; 2. The truly partially sighted. I am told the lists sent up to the Southern Regional Association include children on my "partially sighted" list. I have never been asked to make arrangements for any baby or child to see an ophthalmic surgeon with a view to getting a Certificate of Blindness.

At the moment I have four blind babies all born in 1940. I am sure that, should there be any information which might help others, I can count on the parents of these children to let me send it to you. One of these babies only became known to me this month. He was born and has always lived in my area. At eight months old he was taken to hospital with an illness and, on his return an ophthalmic surgeon told his people that he had lost his sight on account of it and that the case is hopeless. A kindly blind man living in the district discovered the child and told me, but he had been blind over two years before that.

As for children of school age, I was visiting an Infirmary in March, 1942, and saw a child (born 1935) who was said to be blind. I inquired of the Master, who confirmed the statement and said the child had come from a bombed area. He had been in the Infirmary many months. He was not known to the Association for the Blind in his home town.

I discovered that two children whose homes were in my area had been attending a blind school, one for a year and the other for a term or so. A lad attending the same school happened to tell me. Can you wonder that I often ask myself how many others there are that I do not find?

There are a certain number of blind people who do not wish to be known to any Association.

It is unreasonable to think that all those who

apply for Supplementary Pension became blind the moment they applied. I investigated about 25 cases last year and 23 were certified blind. This disproved the idea that many have held that the Register is fairly correct in respect of those needing financial assistance.

Doctors and ophthalmic surgeons know who has become blind. I do not think anyone else can find out unless the blind need something and apply themselves or some chance brings them to our notice.

Yours, etc.,

HILDA BRADFELD.

Reading Braille.

To the Editor.

SIR,—Referring to the letter of Sir Ian Fraser, M.P., in the January issue of THE NEW BEACON, I propose to distinguish between the best or most efficient and the easier way of reading Braille.

During 15 years of teaching I measured the speed of about 120 blind children and youth, all of whom had been taught to read Braille with both hands. I found their speed in nearly all cases greater than that of about 30 war-blinded men, many of whom had taken to reading either with their right or left hand.

Reading Braille with both hands—the forefingers of both hands with the middle fingers in assistance—is a highly complicated process both mentally and physically. It is best comparable with the functioning of the eyes when reading normal print. Whilst the right forefinger and middle finger serve as guides, conveying the image of the word or words to come to the brain, the left forefinger and middle finger do the actual reading, all fingers performing circular movements, those of the right hand independent from those of the left. Before the left hand reaches the end of the line the right changes to the other line. This way produces the best results in speed and fluency, but puts a great mental and physical strain on the reader. That is why children and especially grown-up persons get into the habit of reading with one hand if they are not thoroughly trained and supervised.

To read with one hand—usually with one finger—does not need so much training, represents a less complicated mental process, does not tire the reader so much, but gives, usually, less speed. It is what I call the easier way. Whether a person uses his right or left hand depends on whether he is more skilful with the one or the other. Since the sense of touch is entirely newly developed when learning Braille, either finger can be chosen and used.

To read with the left forefinger only has the advantage that the right forefinger can slide in front without actually reading. It can then change to the other line before the reading finger reaches the end of the line. This increases speed.

If the fingertip is solely used for reading, the smallest cut or abrasion will be sufficient to put an end to reading for a time. If one of two or several reading fingers is injured the speed will only be reduced. This is an important consideration when choosing the proper way of training.

For 20 years I read with the left forefinger, sometimes using the right as guide which slightly increased my speed. When 38 years of age, and with plenty of time on my hands, I trained myself to read with both forefingers. It increased my speed still more.

Men in their twenties are not too old to learn to read with both hands. Greater speed will give them more satisfaction and they will be keener Braille readers.

I found that many war-blinded students in the Institute for Blind Students at Marburg, among whom I lived for a time after the last war, usually used one finger only for reading and did not like it because most of them were slow readers and also accustomed to being read to.

It is difficult to give an indication to Sir Ian Fraser how to increase his speed. The only real improvement would be to learn to read with both hands. Since I realise that his time is too precious to do this, I suggest that he might try to let his left forefinger slide behind his reading finger, changing to the other line before his right forefinger reaches the end of the line. That will increase his speed very slightly, but may tire him more quickly. He may still in later years change to reading with both hands. The director of a bank in Czechoslovakia, blinded in the last war, changed to reading with both hands after retiring from the bank. He was then a man of 50 and increased his speed considerably.

Yours, etc.,
(Dr.) LEO FUCHS.

To the Editor.

SIR,—In the hope of doing something to help solve the problem raised by Sir Ian Fraser, I have carried out three reading speed tests, as follows:—

(a) With the right forefinger only, 135 words per minute; (b) Reading with the right forefinger, but using the left to find the beginning of each new line, 140 words per minute; (c) Reading with both forefingers till nearly the

end of each line, when the left broke off to find the beginning of the next line, 160 words per minute.

The improvement in speed shown by the last of these methods over the first two seems to suggest that two fingers are better than one! In other words, that one way of increasing one's speed in reading is to widen one's field of touch. Actually, I did not bring my left forefinger into full partnership with my right until a year ago, so, though helpful, it does not read equally well. Had it received systematic training from the time when I began learning Braille at the age of five, it seems likely that I could have improved upon my present maximum reading speed.

Yours, etc.,
MARY JAMESON.

To the Editor.

SIR,—Every student of Braille should be required to master, as a memory exercise, the complete list of word signs, contractions and abbreviations, and should repeat these as a regular daily exercise until perfect fluency has been obtained. The time necessary for this exercise, beginning with "a, but, can, do," straight on to the final abbreviations in the exact order of the text book, can be reduced finally to a minute and a half. The effect of this daily exercise is to ensure complete accuracy in writing Braille and greatly increased confidence in reading it.

Yours, etc.,
JOHN R. MACKENZIE,
General Superintendent,
Northern Counties Institute for the Blind,
Inverness.

To the Editor.

SIR,—I am very much interested in the discussion initiated by Sir Ian Fraser on the subject of reading Braille. I fully endorse his statements that fluent readers are to be found among both the "one-handers" and "two-handers"; and that few acquire great speed who have learnt Braille after the school age.

I myself learnt the Braille alphabet at seven years old, and the contractions as then used (in the middle eighties) at twelve. I was taught by an old Normal College pupil, who insisted on my using both hands; and I still usually read that way, using the forefinger of each hand, the two travelling side by side, with the left returning for the next line as the right reaches the end of the first. This I think saves time and ensures not losing one's place. I tested my speed on the current issue of *Progress* to-day, and found that I read between six and seven sheets in half an hour.

I myself should always advise a learner to accustom himself to reading with both hands, unless there were some physical reason why one hand should be more sensitive than the other.

Yours, etc.,

HUBERT G. OKE.

War-time Employment.

To the Editor.

SIR,—I find your notes on War-time Employment of great interest, having been myself marked down as apparently unemployable. I have been with N.A.A.F.I. now for twenty months, for the last twelve as storeman in Command Supply Depots. My poor vision is no great handicap for this type of work, which has been for the most part in a most congenial environment.

Yours, etc.,

R. GAPPER.

Industries for the Blind.

To the Editor.

SIR,—In the December issue of THE NEW BEACON you allowed space to a letter from Mr. S. W. Starling, the Secretary of the National Association of Workshops for the Blind (Incorporated), in which he referred to a paper I gave at the Home Teachers' Conference in Southport in October last. The points raised by Mr. Starling are of little consequence, and I accept his correction of details as to soap making and the facts which led to its discontinuance. Mr. Starling refers to the report prepared by the officer appointed by the National Institute for the Blind to investigate the possibilities of introducing new industries into Workshops for the Blind. For Mr. Starling's benefit I would point out that applications made by the Northern Counties Association for the Blind that the report might be made available to them for information and examination have not been acceded to. I appreciate Mr. Starling's support of my contention that, after the war, workshops may be forced to find employment for blind workers in industries other than the traditional trades now generally practised, and I hope that by co-operation it will be possible to do this.

I am also particularly concerned with the wording of the first two lines of the editorial comment following Mr. Starling's letter, which reads, "There are other inaccuracies in the paper read by Mr. Bradshaw to which Mr. Starling refers." To make such a suggestion is, in my opinion, both unfair and mischievous. From remarks made to me by a number of your readers, this has been interpreted as meaning that the paper, as a whole, is inaccurate; and

although you have, in a vague way, attempted to explain that my references to the activities of the National Institute for the Blind were in connection with the placement of blind persons in sighted industry, it is far from satisfactory. I suggest that the Editor is not in a position to make such observations, particularly as the paper contained certain facts and expressions of opinion, in reference to Workshops for the Blind in the seven Northern Counties, and in particular to the placement of blind persons in sighted industry in the same area, which is experience peculiar to myself. This, therefore, reduces the inaccuracies to a few lines dealing with the activities of the National Institute for the Blind with special reference to their recent arrangements for placement in sighted industry, without reference to any other body.

The fact that the Chairman of the Northern Counties Association for the Blind was elected Chairman of a special Sub-Committee of the National Institute for the Blind is quite coincidental and this appointment has no relation to the subject.

Yours, etc.,

E. V. BRADSHAW,

Regional Supervisor,

*Northern Counties Association
for the Blind.*

[As Mr. Bradshaw questions the propriety of our editorial comment, he will not object to a statement of the facts in question.

Mr. Starling's letter referred to a paper entitled "Blind Persons and Sighted Industry" read by Mr. Bradshaw on the 8th October, 1942, to the Conference of Home Teachers at Southport, which, in accordance with the most useful practice of the Northern Counties Association, was reproduced verbatim for circulation. Steps were taken to secure for this paper rather wider circulation than that ordinarily enjoyed by the Northern Counties Association's reports.

It dealt with the employment of blind persons in sighted industry and emphasised the need for "a better spirit of mutual understanding and co-operation on the part of all who take part in blind welfare services and particularly in work involving employment." It gave a history of work previously done on the placement of the blind in sighted industry, and it referred, in particular, to the activity of the National Institute for the Blind in this matter. "The National Institute for the Blind," said Mr. Bradshaw, "appointed an officer in 1934 to investigate certain sighted industries, to prepare a report and make recommendations. I am not sure that this work was for actual placement, rather do I think it was for suitable occupations. After a two-year survey, he made his report and, although I have never seen this report, I believe it to be substantial and interesting. Cigarette making and soap making were recommended and introduced by a blind workshop in London. These industries employed only a few people and after a short time, and for various reasons, were closed down. The National

Institute for the Blind do not appear to have further considered the report, and since about 1937 little or no action appears to have been taken on it."

Mr. Starling's letter and the account given of the National Institute's placement work in the January issue of THE NEW BEACON show that the editorial comment of which Mr. Bradshaw complains was mild and forbearing.

Mr. Bradshaw continued to give an account of work done by the Northern Counties Association on placement in the course of the last year and he added, "We had visited many factories and were actually recording placements when the National Institute for the Blind circulated all Registering Agencies indicating an entirely new method of recruitment and procedure. This was made in agreement with the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour, who also circulated instructions to Employment Exchange Managers. This scheme appeared to ignore the Regional Controllers, who to us were a very important and essential part of the machine. While the National Institute knew what we in the North were doing, and how far our arrangements had succeeded, we had been ignored. My view is that we should have been consulted before the circular was issued as confusion resulted which could have been avoided.

"The amount of work involved in carrying out our scheme was considerable. We have, however, now come to an arrangement with the National Institute, and I personally hope that in future we shall be consulted on all matters regarding employment in the North, whether in blind workshops or sighted industry."

The facts are as follows. The Northern Counties Association is fully represented on the National Institute's Council, some of the Association's representatives having been appointed by the Council to important posts on its Committees. Consequently, representatives of the Northern Counties Association have been kept fully in touch with the National Institute's policy and have shared fully the responsibility for it. The statement by Mr. Bradshaw that "while the National Institute knew what we in the North were doing, and how far our arrangements had succeeded, we had been ignored," and that the National Institute for the Blind's scheme ran contrary to the Northern Counties Association's scheme, has, as we understand the facts, no justification whatever. It is particularly unfortunate that Home Teachers of the North, many of whom carry on their admirable personal work without close knowledge of questions of policy involved, should have been given a statement of "facts" which is so obviously misleading, and that the Institute should, in this way, be subjected to criticism which seems to have no shadow of justification.—EDITOR.]

PERSONALIA

We much regret to hear of the illness of MR. G. HOLME, Hon. Sec. of "Fellowship House," the Holiday Home for the Deaf-Blind at Hoylake, which owes so much to his initiative and devoted work. We wish him a speedy recovery.

* * *

MISS F. LAISHLY, for nearly 18 years Matron of Torr Home for the Blind, Plymouth, has

retired, and early this month she was presented with a cheque for £105 by the President of the Institution, Sir William Mountstephen, in recognition of her services. Tribute was paid to her excellent work.

* * *

The Teacher of the Blind, commenting on the retirement of MR. EDWARD EVANS from his position as Headmaster and Superintendent of the East Anglian Schools for the Blind and Deaf to take up the post of Assistant Secretary at the National Institute for the Blind, says: "Very few movements in connection with the blind have taken place during the last 30 years in which Mr. Evans has not played some active and definite part. He was a master at Linden Lodge School for the Blind until he became headmaster and superintendent at Gorleston-on-Sea in 1928. We know what splendid work he has done at both these schools. He has been chairman of our College on two occasions. He has rendered valuable service on the Examiners' Board for the School Teachers' Diploma, the Home Teachers' Diploma and the Pianoforte Tuners' Diploma. He has been a powerful member of the Executive, not only in criticising, but in making constructive suggestions in a very forceful manner —yet perhaps his greatest *forte* was in representing the College as a delegate. He has been chairman of several special College of Teachers of the Blind sub-committees, including the recently appointed Replanning Committee. He did valuable work on the Eastern Counties Association and for its successor, the Southern Regional Association. His papers at conferences have always been well prepared, admirably delivered and well-received. He is an authority on the deaf-blind [and author of the Manual Alphabet for the Deaf-Blind]. All our children know him as Editor of the *School Magazine*, which he has maintained at a high standard, and his editorials never failed to arouse the children's interest in some fresh point of view. The National Institute for the Blind is receiving from us one who is not only an expert in our problems, but is *au fait* with every aspect of blind affairs."

* * *

MR. R. G. H. GOUGH, Deputy Superintendent of the East Anglian School for Blind and Deaf Children, has been appointed Head Master and Superintendent in succession to Mr. Edward Evans. MR. GOUGH has been on the school staff since February, 1921. He was educated at New College School, Oxford and at Culham Training College and he began his career at the Blind and Deaf School at Stoke in 1911.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blind Bandsmen Help Children Injured in Air Raid.—Sam and Alf are sightless musicians who harmonise together in Bert Sainsbury's Band. Sam expertly plays the accordion, saxophone and piano; Alf performs on the unwieldy bass. They play regularly at war charity dances, and this month they were specially intent on the success of the dance. It was in aid of the children injured in the school air-raid tragedy at Lewisham.

A Singer's Tribute to a Blind Organist.—The following letter appeared in the December issue of the *Musical Times*:—"On one occasion it was my privilege to sing at a recital in a nearby country church. The organist there is a blind A.R.C.O. A few days before the recital he sent a request that the music be forwarded. During that time he had completely memorised everything, which included classical works. I must truly say that I have never had a more beautiful and accurate accompaniment played by anyone. It was note-perfect—a fine musical background—a sheer joy to sing to in every way. If this is what blind musicians can do, I would rather sing with them than those who have sight."—GERRISH BALL.

Edward Isaacs' Portrait.—Commenting on the appearance together at a Manchester Mid-day Concert of Dame Myra Hess and Mr. Edward Isaacs, "Denys," in the *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, says:—

"Even the unmusical have a great admiration for Mr. Isaacs, the admiration for a man who courageously overcame the terrible blow of blindness to continue with his music. That courage has been heightened by his insistence that valuation of his work must never be influenced by thought of his handicap.

"He need not worry. Appreciation of his artistic merit is sincere and without outside aid.

"Incidentally, I recall that Mr. Isaacs once sat for his portrait and played the piano the whole time, to the delight and inspiration of the artist, who afterwards declared that the music helped her to work cheerfully and quickly."

The Blind Singer and the Cripples.—A blind pianist-singer, Miss Rose, of Ladywood, was a popular visitor to the women's wards of the Woodlands Cripples' Hospital at Northfield last month.

She accompanied Mr. Reginald Parsons, the Methodist local preacher and, in addition to singing six solos, played the accompaniments to hymns chosen by the patients.

So popular were her items with the crippled women that, at their request, she went on singing after the close of the service, while dinner was being served in the wards.

At the close, Miss Rose had a chat at each bedside, with a special word for one of her audience who, in addition to being crippled, was blind herself.

Royal Normal College Successes.—Local Examination Successes announced by the Royal Normal College for the Blind are as follows:

GUILDHALL SCHOOL OF MUSIC AND DRAMA—*Licentiate*—*Piano*—*Teacher*.

Leonard Garner. Honours (see below).

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC—*Licentiate*—*Piano*—*Teacher*.

Alfred Hicks.

ASSOCIATED BOARD OF THE ROYAL SCHOOLS OF MUSIC, LONDON.

Grade II—Piano—Audrey Hawkins Credit.

Nona Kiddell Credit.

Michael Sparrow

" IV " Irvine Swift. Distinction.

" V " Jean Watts.

" VI " Dorothy Rooke. Credit.

ROYAL SOCIETY OF ARTS. *Typewriting*—*Stage III* (Advanced).

Vera Lloyd. Second. Olive White. First.

Hazel Watson. First.

Typewriting—*Stage II*.

Georgina Bright. First. Margaret Perrett. First.

Betty Jell. First. John C. Plummer. First.

Ronald Johnston. First. Jean Reynolds. First.

William Klippel. First. Anna Weiss. Second.

Kathleen Mulcaster. First.

Typewriting—*Stage I*.

Robert Appleton. Credit. Maurice Tucker. Credit.

Ronald Tarrant. Credit.

Shorthand—*Stage II* (100 words per minute).

Georgina Bright. Kathleen Mulcaster.

Betty Jell. Margaret Perrett.

Vera Lloyd. Jean Reynolds.

Jack Morison. Olive White.

Shorthand—*Stage II* (80 words per minute).

Ronald Tarrant. Maurice Tucker.

Guildhall Gold Medal Award.—Mr. Leonard Garner, whose success in the Licentiate examination of the Guildhall School of Music and Drama is announced above, has been awarded a gold medal by the Guildhall School, having obtained the highest marks in the United Kingdom and Eire—a splendid achievement which redounds to the credit of both Mr. Garner and the Royal Normal College.

THE FUTURE OF THE HOME TEACHING SERVICE

FROM time to time those who are imperfectly aware of what the home teaching service can mean at its best to the elderly blind throughout the country are critical of it, and inclined to doubt its future usefulness. Their criticisms have, as a rule, a two-fold basis. First, they assert that in many cases the amount of teaching done by the home teachers is so limited that it quite fails to justify the title they bear; and secondly, they suggest that when the financial burden has been lifted from the elderly and unemployable blind, as it already has been in some measure and as we hope it will be still more completely in the post-war world, a great part of the work of the home teacher will be swept away.

Each argument is sufficiently specious to require some discussion. To the first, that the amount of teaching done is limited, we must assent. Only a few of the unemployable blind on the register of a home teacher wish to learn to read Braille or Moon. After all, men or women who left school at the age of fourteen and who have rarely opened a book since and only occasionally a newspaper (and that preferably the *News of the World*) are hardly likely to turn to the pleasures of literature in later life, when reading is in a new and difficult medium and fingers have often become insensitive. Some will want to learn pastime handicrafts, and these the home teacher should instruct. But even here, it must be remembered that lack of sight confers no magic gift of manual dexterity, and that there is not much fun in making things unless there is some market for them. Only a limited number of men and women will be found who want to make baskets or wool rugs; and of this number, some who are entered as pupils on the home teacher's register may flag before the year is out, and others may become so proficient that they will not need lessons for long. For this reason, many people would prefer the title "teacher" to be dropped, and that of "welfare visitor" substituted; though in the widest sense it can still be claimed that it is the home visitor's job to help the newly blind to live in a four-sensed world, so that even though she may not be a teacher in an academic sense, she is required to give indirect and informal instruction.

The second argument, which states that with financial security and the more general almonising of grants by post, the need for the home visitor of the blind no longer exists, is more serious. For it shows in those who make the criticism a complete misunderstanding of what the service, imaginatively and sympathetically carried out, should mean. The physical handicap of blindness, together with the infirmities of old age, make it difficult for many of the elderly blind to have contacts with the outside world, and for such the friendship of the home visitor can be invaluable. It is she who is responsible for seeing that medical attention and nursing are forthcoming in times of sickness; who helps the blind man or woman to keep in touch with son or daughter who has left home; who reads aloud to those who want to keep in touch with current affairs; who arranges for attendance at church or club for those who can get about; who finds voluntary workers who will supplement her own efforts by visiting the lonely; who sees that the smoking chimney is put right and the leaking roof mended; who discusses football pools and the Beveridge Report with fine catholicity. All these are forms of service which the blind cannot easily forego, and they are not more needed by the poor than by the well-to-do.

Finally, those who have watched the development of the home teaching service in the past twenty-odd years, and see in it one of the fairest fruits of the Blind Persons Act, look forward to a time when, with the lightening of the financial burden of the blind, home teachers will be able to develop further than hitherto the Social Centres side of their work. In some urban areas, Clubs for the Blind, open not merely on one afternoon in the week but every day, have been attempted. Such clubs, with reading room, facilities for handicraft classes and games, and a communal kitchen supplying well cooked meals at reasonable charges, together with opportunities for social intercourse, would open a new world to those blind men and women who to-day live in mean streets, with little but the weekly or fortnightly visits of the home teacher to brighten their lives.

THE EDITOR.

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION”

By W. H. COATES

II.—At School

NEVER before had Tom been cooped up in such a narrow space with so large a crowd of boys as he was in the resident school to which he was sent at the age of eleven.

For a while he was much occupied in adjusting himself to the new life. He and his fellows were marched about like little soldiers. There were special times and places for everything, and everything was numbered. It was all orderly; it all worked with machine-like smoothness and regularity; it was all as bleak as a barracks. Only the personalities of one or two of the masters warmed and cheered the atmosphere.

Some of his fellow-pupils seemed queer. One of them, for instance, instead of playing normally with the other boys, spent much time sitting on a bench, rocking his body forward and backward, and snapping his fingers on alternate hands. Another liked to slip away into a remote corner of the playground, and there jump up and down by himself till he was tired. These two got a good deal of ragging. More respected was the one who could make his nose crack like a whip; but most admired of all were those who could give excellent vocal caricatures of the various members of the staff.

There were as many girls in the building as boys; but never on any account were the sexes allowed to mix. They lived in separate halves of the school, ate on opposite sides of the dining-room, prayed on opposite sides of the chapel. A formidable mass of barbed-wire entanglements had been erected between them in the shapes of rules and penalties and precautionary devices. Some of the younger boys whispered to Tom that if he ever dared to speak to one of the girls he would be committing a most grave offence, and that the punishment thereof would be too horrible for description. Tom could not imagine why there should be all this fuss. He had played with girls hundreds of times. He had climbed trees with them. And now he was forbidden to speak to them! If the teachers and the Committee of Governors frowned so heavily upon it, surely there must be something really immoral in having anything to do with girls?

The forbidden thing fascinates. That statement is as old as Eve, but has lost none of its

truth in becoming commonplace. There is another like it: “a mystery attracts.” These two forces combined to draw the attention of Tom and his schoolmates to the female half of the establishment. It developed the enchantment of a Garden of the Hesperides, into which they would like to have entered if only to play at hide-and-seek, but dared not.

The sexes were in juxtaposition but not in communication. Each was constantly present to stimulate and hold the attention of the other, but all the legitimate modes of exercise and nourishment by which the sexual life can grow to health and full stature, were denied it. The sexual life, in a well-organised mind, is closely knit to the social life. It operates through the social life. In these school conditions the sexual life was cut off from the social life; was shooed into a corner as an outcast and told that it ought to be ashamed of itself for having such ideas. As a consequence the social life was left poor and anæmic, and the sexual life was apt to grow deformed.

The dynamic currents of youth whose normal outlets are dammed up, may by wise guidance be made to flow into other channels, setting up activities which will enlarge and enrich and cleanse the mind. But at Tom's school little or nothing of the sort was done (in those days). It was not thought necessary by the authorities to arouse the pupils' interest in anything outside their own four walls—to encourage them to use their heads. Above all, nothing was done to strike out from them any spark of creative imagination, which might have done much to engross their energies and give their minds strenuous and salutary exercise. Since then, no doubt, institutions have changed with the changing world.

Another phenomenon quite new to Tom was the pairing-off of a senior boy with a junior. A boy of perhaps eighteen would single out for favour a boy of about twelve. We are told that a mild degree of homosexuality not infrequently appears as a passing phase in adolescence; but Tom had never observed it outside the walls. (He was of course too young to be of any use as a henchman of psychology.) Here, the thing was forced upon his notice all the time. He was subjected to a little of it himself. The seniors would walk round the playground with their

favourites ("pets" the other boys called them); would nurse them on their knees by the fire; would feed them upon dainty morsels. In some cases they visited them in the dormitories to bid them a fond good-night. There were advantages in being a pet. Some pets were thought to be very lucky.

Of course most of this lop-sided comradeship was harmless enough, but here and there it may have gone too far; may sometimes have hardened into real perversion.

Nevertheless much useful work was done to make self-reliant men and women of the pupils, and to fit them to face the world. Tom left the school a much-changed person from the urchin who had entered it under his name. His bodily deportment was good, his fingers were deft, his habits hygienic. His braille was first-rate; he had a useful skill on the typewriter, a good grounding in music, and a fair smattering of all the elementary subjects. He had reason to be grateful for these accomplishments.

(To be continued.)

INDUSTRIAL NOTES

By BEN PURSE

IT is nearly a year since the writer of these notes reviewed the activities of the Liverpool Workshops for the Blind, and it is now opportune once more to re-examine the records of this splendid industrial undertaking. In the columns of this journal we have repeatedly stressed the importance of the special workshops and emphasised their unique place in the scheme of things. No social system which undertakes to protect the interests of the blind could possibly dispense with the services of these organisations, even though they are sometimes costly to maintain, and the management of the undertakings may appear to lack the imagination and foresight which progressive developments always necessitate. The workshop for the blind therefore is an indispensable quantity in our social system which requires no justification or special pleading either in peace-time or in a period of national emergency.

Liverpool Workshops.

One of the oldest and most enterprising of these establishments is the Liverpool Workshops for the Blind, the 81st annual report of which contains many important facts which must interest all who are concerned with industrial progress; 151 blind persons have been fully employed throughout the year; indeed the organisation has not experienced any serious degree of unemployment during the past 30 years, which speaks volumes for the initiative, enterprise and business acumen of the management.

The war in the Far East has caused a considerable reduction in the supply of raw materials and has increased prices appreciably. By careful buying and economy in the use of materials it is possible to report another year of

successful trading. The sales for 1941-2 amounted to £65,604 as compared with £59,590 for the previous year. The continued support of the Admiralty, War Office, Air Ministry and other Government Departments, as well as local authorities and industrial undertakings, have been an encouraging feature of the year under review. More than 90 per cent. of the orders executed has been provided by Government Departments and public utility companies. The following details are interesting, since they disclose in a concise manner the character of the trading that has been conducted: by the sale of brushes £19,181, mats and matting £11,398, baskets £10,477, upholstery £3,998, and factored goods £20,549.

Economic earnings obtained by the blind workers during the year amounted to £12,940, to which must be added a sum of £9,732 in respect of augmentation of wages, towards which £2,781 was contributed from the Charity Fund. The number of retired workers in receipt of grants from the Annuity Fund was ten, on whose behalf the sum of £336 was provided.

Productive wages to seeing workers amounted to £1,917, and unproductive wages £668, while to blind persons similarly classified £535 was paid. The gross profit on trading was stated to be £15,290, and the sum transferred to the General Charity Account was £2,282. Earnings of home workers are given as £1,175.

The new Building Fund now stands at £3,542, while the total value of investments, including freehold and leasehold properties, general investments, etc., was stated to be £65,513. The proportion of collections received under the agreement with the National Institute for the Blind was £3,883.

Liverpool Home Teaching Society.

The Liverpool Home Teaching Society is affiliated to the Workshops, and it acts as agent for the Liverpool City Council and the Bootle Corporation. The amount paid to the unemployable blind and their dependants during the year under review was £47,916. There are 16 home teachers employed in the area, of whom only two are blind persons. A great local authority should be able to employ a higher percentage of blind home teachers than this, and we hope the Committee of the Society concerned will take appropriate steps to remedy this most obvious deficiency.

The number of blind persons on the live register of the Society is stated to be 1,855, of whom 1,659 were classified as unemployable at March 31st last.

We think the foregoing facts abundantly justify the statements made earlier in these notes, for undoubtedly a superb social service is being discharged in this area, such as will compare more than favourably with that undertaken in some other parts of Britain. A generous local authority, a band of devoted officials, and a number of keen voluntary workers constitute the trinity personnel responsible for all the activities here enumerated, and so long as this threefold partnership can be maintained, blind welfare services in this area will continue to flourish. One is perfectly justified in saying that the admirable voluntary assistance that is being rendered constitutes the very quintessence of philanthropy.

Oldham Workshops.

The 58th report of these Workshops makes exceptionally good and interesting reading, and disposes of the contention that an establishment of medium size can never be economically worth while. It is admitted that this is quite an exceptional case, and the satisfactory situation is accounted for by the fact that for many years the Oldham Workshops for the Blind have been fortunate in having excellent management, for the administrative officials have had long experience, and the forward buying policy adopted by the organisation has enabled it to draw upon large stocks of raw material which it would have been impossible otherwise to procure in the open market with present limitations of supplies.

Fifty-three blind workers have been employed throughout the year in those industries that are usually practised. Productive wages to the blind amounted to £1,908 and augmentation to

£1,980. Other benefits conferred by the Institution, such as unproductive wages, £144, supplementary grants £689, miscellaneous grants £20, holiday and sick pay £274, extra supplementary grants £1,044, were provided.

The sales for the year have realised £15,754 as against £14,854 for the previous year, an increase of £900. The gross profit is stated to be £5,104, and profit carried to charity account £1,327. Dividends and interest yielded £298, chief rents £9, and refund of Income Tax £239. To provide for the financial benefits enumerated above the Lancashire County Council, contributed £1,598, and the Oldham Corporation £3,077.

It is a little difficult to understand why economic earnings are registered at so low a level and why it should be necessary, in view of the comparative prosperity of the workshops, to devote so much money for supplementary purposes, but there is doubtless some reasonable explanation of the facts we have given above. It would be in the interests of the organisation if explanatory notes were given in the body of the report, for it is obvious that the duties of the Oldham Corporation involve a larger expenditure than that required on behalf of workshop employees, since that local authority must also make provision for a very large number of persons who are classified as unemployable. The last report of the Northern Counties Association states that there are 308 blind persons in the borough.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the death of:—

Major-General H. Willans, C.B., C.B.E., D.S.O., M.C., T.D., Director-General of Army Welfare and Education, who was killed in a flying accident in the Middle East. General Willans served with distinction in the last war, winning the M.C. and later the D.S.O. and being twice mentioned in dispatches. When the war ended, he entered civilian life and became Secretary and General Manager of the Incorporated Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind, in 1928. He held this post for over five years, and upon relinquishing it, he consented to serve as a member of the Association's Council and Standing Committee, only resigning from these when he was promoted to command the 2nd (London) Infantry Brigade T.A., and his military duties made it impossible for him to continue. He served for a time on

the Committee of the Greater London Fund and was the first Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the Association of Workshops for the Blind; his stimulating influence during the pioneer years of that Association was of great value. From 1931 to 1934 he represented the Association of Workshops on the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind and he also served on the Institute's General Purposes committee and the Home Industries Board of Directors.

In a notice of his death *The Times* describes him as "a man of great energy, boundless enthusiasm, and quick and daring spirit . . . He was never afraid to take risks in his work and he had at his disposal a fund of shrewdness and common sense." Those who remember him for his work in relation to blind welfare will rejoice that his great abilities were used in a sphere which, to quote *The Times* once more, "affected for good the whole Army and through the Army may even in some degree affect for good the whole country in the future."

Niel Shelmerdine, at Charlton Kings, aged 64. He came to Cheltenham in 1919 after service in the war and became actively engaged in various branches of philanthropic work. He was Hon. Treasurer of the Gloucester County Association for the Blind, and since 1920 had been Hon. Manager of the Cheltenham Workshops for the Blind.

Charles Collins, of Nottingham, aged 73. A member of the Society of Friends, he helped to found the Nottingham Blind Helpers' Society a generation before any responsibility for the blind was undertaken by the State. A social club was started, outings were arranged, and application was made for free travelling for the blind in trams and buses.

Miss Gertrude Elizabeth Slann, of Winchester. Just over two years ago she became totally blind. She bore the affliction with remarkable fortitude, and began to learn to read in Moon type, a remarkable achievement as she was then in her 85th year. Among the last books she had been re-reading in Moon was Thackeray's "Vanity Fair" and several of the novels of Hugh Walpole.

G. F. A. Webster, of Minehead, aged nearly 90. He had been blind for 40 years, and at the funeral service the Rev. Gordon Hamlin referred to him as "this brave warrior in the dark," touching on his love for his church, his cheery outlook, his eager spirit, his constant appreciation of Christian fellowship and, above all, his deep and sincere faith.

Thomas McKenzie, of Hook. A skilled craftsman and technician, he later accepted with

fortitude and cheerful courage the changed conditions which blindness brought him, and threw himself into the exploration of a new world. In Hampshire for 21 years he taught, visited, comforted and encouraged all the blind people he could find. For the self-sacrifice and selflessness of his service all who knew him will long remember him.

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home.

Devon County Association for the Blind.—

The Association now cares for just over 1,000 blind persons, and also maintains a watching list of 300 cases. Of the 1,000 persons on the register about 50 per cent. are in receipt of domiciliary assistance and care is taken that allowances to blind persons do not fall below the supplementary pension level. Voluntary Funds show a considerable increase on the previous year, and the report pays a special tribute to the work of the South-Western Branch of the National Institute for the Blind in its money-raising activities. The work of the home teachers continues to be of great value to the blind, in spite of the ever-growing difficulties of war-time transport.

Southern Regional Association for the Blind.

—Conference Report Number 6 gives an account of the Conference arranged by the Southern Regional Association in June to consider the place of blind welfare and the position of the blind in the social services, as reviewed by the Beveridge Committee. The report gives a detailed note of the speech delivered by Miss Florence Horsbrugh, M.P., who opened the Conference, and of the resolutions subsequently moved by Mr. F. P. Ogden, Captain Cochrane-Barnett and Mr. Edward Evans. Mr. Ogden dealt with the question of certification, Captain Cochrane-Barnett with the desirability of greater uniformity in domiciliary assistance and Mr. Edward Evans with the problems of training and placement. Discussions followed the papers, and details of these discussions are given in the report. Copies are obtainable on application to the Secretary of the Southern Regional Association, 14, Howick Place, S.W.1.

Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb.—The Association suffered a serious loss in the death of its Chairman, the Rev. Prebendary Pennyman, in the spring of 1942.

He had served on the Committee for 25 years, and had been responsible for raising large sums of money by broadcast and other appeals; as vicar of St. Mark's, North Audley Street, he had been able to bring the needs of the Association to the notice of a wide circle of friends. Readers of THE NEW BEACON who know something of the devotion of the Rev. Albert Smith to the cause of the deaf-blind will rejoice to learn that he has been made a Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral.

The report records that the Church of St. Bede's, Clapham, was seriously injured in a raid in April of last year, but six fire-watchers, deaf men trained in fire-fighting and first-aid and led by the hearing Chaplain, were untiring and dauntless, and were successful in lessening the damage. "Three deaf men did a great work" and one of them helped to rake out the boiler when the room was flooded and filled with steam and coke fumes. Only when it became impossible to see or to breathe did the men give up their task.

Mr. and Mrs. Selwyn Oxley's Work for the Deaf.—We have received from Mr. Selwyn Oxley his 29th Annual Report of "general honorary work for the deaf, deaf-blind and hard of hearing," and as usual its pages are packed with information about the deaf and those who help them in all parts of the country. Naturally, travel restrictions have made Mr. Selwyn Oxley's more far-reaching activities impossible, but he keeps in touch with many organisations and workers. He gives a cheerful account of a small group of evacuated deaf-blind who are living near Gloucester, and says that "their cheerfulness under adversity was amazing." A.R.P. authorities in Hull have provided the deaf and deaf-blind with special whistles to be used if emergency arises, and Mr. Oxley comments on the appeal of the Mayor of Leyton asking all neighbours of blind or deaf persons to regard them as their special care in the event of raid or invasion.

Barclay School for Blind and Partially Sighted Girls.—Evacuation seems to have been a particularly happy accomplishment here, for the girls are living in delightful surroundings, and in a well-appointed country house; and during the first term in their new home every child put on weight. The school is fortunate, too, in its neighbour, Colonel Horlick, who supplies milk and vegetables and has shown the children "kindnesses too numerous to mention." Out of school activities have included the raising of money for war charities, pig feeding, knitting for Russia, and an active part in the local

Warships Week, when the School Group raised over £500.

Empire

S.P.G. Blind School, Ranchi.—The School has had a difficult year, and has had to contend with an outbreak of smallpox, unexpected expenses for repairs of the school buildings and a serious increase in the cost of coal and clothing. But the report ends with the reminder that "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us," and a note of confidence that the work begun 40 years ago will continue and increase. Mention is made of the Braille Committee recently held in New Delhi to further the adoption of a uniform code for India, and the report states that should it be necessary the School is prepared to receive war-blinded soldiers and to help them in the task of readjustment.

Dadar School, Bombay.—This school has since 1939 been under the direction of the Society for the Protection of Children in Western India, but it reverted to the American Marathi Mission on April 1st of the present year, as the Society is unable to bear the additional financial burden of the School as well as its other commitments. Nearly 40 boys and girls are cared for up to the age of 14, and there is no distinction of caste, creed or colour. In addition to primary education, some industrial training is given, and the School has a gymnasium and running track. Out-of-school activities include Scouts and Guides, a Literary Society and School magazine, and all take part in household duties.

Foreign.

Association for the Welfare of the Blind, Geneva.—"In a world of violence, where pity for the weak and the unhappy seems to have been banished, it is a great privilege to be able to continue our work for the blind." These are the opening words of the report for 1940 and 1941, and the note thus struck is reiterated again and again in its pages. The troublous times have hampered the Association's work to some extent, for materials for blind-made goods (especially cane) are scarce, and the work of the Library has been curtailed owing to the prohibition of Braille in Germany and the occupied countries. The report closes with a reminder to its readers that they should take consolation from the fact that the war, though it may have cramped the work for the blind, has at least left Switzerland free from the more deadly ravages of the times, and allowed her to continue in the tasks which "unite all men of goodwill."

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.
NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances :		s.	d.
18993	Berlin, I. I threw a Kiss in the Ocean, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
18994	Charles, H., and Miller, S. The Gremlin Song, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
18995	Lee, L., and Manners, Z. Pennsylvania Polka	0	6
18996	Scotto, V. Only You, Song Fox-Trot	0	6

Notice on Braille Music.

Apart from the publication of a limited quantity of Dance Music for the benefit of blind musicians who need to be up to date in these matters, the National Institute for the Blind has postponed publication of new music in order to economise paper and metal. There is in stock, however, a very large quantity of music printed before the war. On the advice of the Board of Education's Inspector of Music, the National Institute has now decided to print and publish certain Church Services for the benefit of blind Church Organists and some Madrigals.

The Services shortly to be produced are :—

		s.	d.
18998	Te Deum in C, by Boyce	1	0
18997	Te Deum in G, by Alan Gray	1	0
18991	Communion Service in F Minor, by H. G. Ley	0	6
18992	Evening Service in B Minor, by Tertius Noble	1	0

The Madrigals are :—

19000	In Going to My Naked Bed (four-part), by Richard Edwards	1	0
18999	The Silver Swan (five-part), by Orlando Gibbons	1	0

As no new Church or Choral music has been published for some two years, the demand for these new publications may be heavy, and as it is desired to avoid any waste of paper, intending purchasers are requested to order in advance of publication. All orders at the National Institute by April 17th will be met; no guarantee of supply can be given of orders received after that date.

BRAILLE BOOKS.

Forthcoming Panda.

No. 61. Front Line 1940-41, The Official Story of the Civil Defence of Britain. Issued for the Ministry of Home Security by the Ministry of Information. 2 vols. 1s. net the set.

Here is a story which will bring memories back to all readers. Written without verbiage or rhetoric, it is the plain tale of an intensely dramatic and heroic episode in our history. It is a tale of individual effort and performance, a narrative of action—of the bombing and what was done about it by men and women—and not an account of administration. The Battle of Britain was the triumph of the few; the Battle against the Bombs was the achievement of the many.

MOON BOOKS.

4632-4638 Show Boat, by Edna Ferber. 7 vols. (Limited Edition.)

APPARATUS.

Reduction in the Cost of Apparatus and Appliances.

In the interests of blind purchasers who are resident in the British Empire the National Institute for the Blind has decided to incur a larger loss on its sales of apparatus and appliances. A new price-list, embodying the changes to be made, will shortly be published, and regular customers, or those thinking of making purchases are invited to write to the Institute for this list, which will be sent post free on application. Orders received up to February 28th are subject to the existing price-list. The Institute will continue to supply apparatus post-free to customers resident in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The price of manilla paper, qualities 1 and 2 will remain unchanged, but quality 4 will be reduced from 6d. to 4d. per pound post free. Braille shorthand rolls will be reduced from 9d. to 6d.

Free Gifts of Apparatus.

The National Institute for the Blind has decided to make a free gift of any piece of apparatus listed by the Institute and unobtainable in the open market to any blind person resident in the British Empire requiring such apparatus, *at the outset of his or her career in order to earn a livelihood*, on condition that the apparatus is not such as normally would be supplied by, or with the help of, the employer. The Institute will also be glad to consider applications from blind persons in employment who are not able to meet the list price of any tool required in their trade. Applications for free gifts must be made on an application form obtainable from the Institute. In view of the present difficulties of supply, it must be understood that all orders and all requests for free gifts are accepted subject to the apparatus in question being available.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

MANUSCRIPT MUSIC LIBRARY.

577-583	Congregational Hymnary (Revised Version), Words, 7 vols. (including Index to First Lines).
584-590	My Life of Music, by Henry J. Wood. 7 vols.

VACANCIES IN HOMES, ETC.

31st January, 1943.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Northampton Bloomfield, Leamington	—
Wavertree House, Hove	—
The Haven, Scarborough	—
Fair Lawn, Totteridge (for convalescence or short periods of rest)	10
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea ..	—
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring ..	4
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay ..	3
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth	3

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

HAMBLIN READING DESK FOR THE PARTIALLY SIGHTED.

Advertiser possessing above (210 volts) would be glad to give it to a school where good use could be made of it. Apply to Editor, THE NEW BEACON, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

HOME TEACHERS' EXAMINATION, 1943.—Those anxious to qualify for the College of Teachers' Certificate are invited to apply for details of a Postal Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham R.I. for the Blind, Harborne, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

DOMESTIC HELP REQUIRED at the Royal Victoria School for the Blind, Witherslack Hall, Grange-over-Sands, Lancashire, and at the School premises in Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Work would suit capable girls with partial vision on the waiting list for Workshop Employment or who have been de-certified. Apply Headmaster.

NORTHAMPTONSHIRE (TOWN AND COUNTY) ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND.

APPOINTMENT OF SIGHTED HOME TEACHER AND VISITOR (WOMAN). Applications are invited for the above position. Applicants possessing Certificate of Training—Salary £156 per annum, rising by annual increments of £10, plus war bonus at present 6 per cent.; experience will be taken into account when fixing the commencing salary. Uncertificated persons—Salary commencing £135 per annum plus war bonus 6 per cent.; on attaining Home Teachers' Certificate, salary would immediately be increased to £165 per annum plus 6 per cent. war bonus.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by three recent testimonials, should reach the Secretary by February 28th.

S. JACKSON, Secretary.

21-25, Gray Street, Northampton.

NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY COUNCIL.

WANTED—Sighted Certificated Home Teacher for the Blind (Lady). Salary £180, rising on approved service to £220 per annum by annual increments of £10 (subsistence allowance has been compounded in the salary); a cost of living bonus is paid in addition, and at present amounts to 10s. per week.

The successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination and to contribute to the Council's Superannuation Scheme (Local Government and Other Officers Superannuation Act, 1937). She must be prepared to reside in the area to which she is appointed, and should be able and willing to drive a motor car which will be provided by the Council.

Forms of application may be obtained from the County Medical Officer, New Senior School, Mitford Road, Morpeth, and should be returned to him by March 6th, 1943.

Canvassing, either directly or indirectly, will be a disqualification.

C. HAROLD CARTER,

Clerk of the County Council.

New Senior School, Morpeth, Northumberland.

SWITCH OFF!

Attractive Gummed Labels bearing the words "Switch off! Light, like sight, is precious," beneath an heraldic lion, may be obtained from the National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, W.1, price 3d. a dozen.

RESIDENT ASSISTANT MASTER OR MISTRESS REQUIRED—Certificated or uncertificated—at the Royal Victoria School for the Blind, Witherslack Hall, Grange-over-Sands, Lancashire. Burnham Scale III and war bonus. Apply Headmaster.

HOME TEACHER (SIGHTED) REQUIRED for a town area. Applications, stating age, experience (if any), with testimonials and any other particulars, should be sent to the South Beds Society for the Welfare of the Blind, Williamson Street, Luton, Beds.

UNWANTED TALKING BOOK MACHINES.

The National Institute for the Blind wishes to remind owners of Talking Books that machines no longer required should be returned to the Institute, which will pay the best possible cash price for them. Some owners no longer requiring machines have given them away or sold them privately, but such practice is not fair to the very long waiting list of applicants to whom the Institute allocates machines in proper order. War-time conditions make it increasingly difficult to obtain new machines, and the Institute begs all users to co-operate with it in securing fair distribution.

HENSHAW'S INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

CRAFT INSTRUCTOR: BASKET DEPARTMENT.

Applications are invited for the appointment of Craft Instructor for trainees. Applicants should possess the Craft Instructor's Diploma, or will be required to pass this examination within two years of appointment. Salary according to Burnham Scale. (Board residence, etc., in return for supervision duties.) Applications, stating age and experience, with copies of three testimonials, should reach the Superintendent by the 25th February at Old Trafford, Manchester, 16.

CITY OF BRADFORD

ROYAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

APPOINTMENT OF WOMAN HOME TEACHER/VISITOR. Applications are invited for the position of Home Teacher in the Blind Persons Department. Candidates should be experienced and be able to give instruction in reading raised types and in simple pastime handicrafts. They should possess the Home Teachers' Certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind.

The salary will be in accordance with Grade F 2 of the Corporation's Salary and Grading Scheme, which is £160 per annum rising by annual increments of £10 to a maximum of £190 per annum, together with a war bonus which is at present £26 per annum. The appointment will be made at the minimum salary of the Grade. The successful candidate will be required to contribute to the Local Government and Other Officers Superannuation Act, and to pass a medical examination.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, together with copies of two recent testimonials, should be received by me, endorsed "Home Teacher—Royal Institution for the Blind," on or before 28th February.

N. L. FLEMING, Town Clerk.

Town Hall, Bradford.

The New BEACON

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 315.

MARCH 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.

WE LIVE AGAIN—I.

By F. BURVILLE

MUCH has been said and written concerning blind education and general welfare; so much so that one is inclined to wonder if it is at all possible to add anything of use. My intention is to draw a number of word pictures of life as I and my fellows have lived it in days past and present. My purpose in writing is in the main to help the younger reader to form a balanced and rational view of progress made in the education of the blind and general welfare; also, to arrest the attention of the educated blind man and woman to the end that they will take a lead in discussing Blind Welfare problems in a forthright manner, and generally take a bigger interest in the shaping of things to come.

My first picture is of a smallish L.C.C. residential school situated in the suburbs of London some 33 years ago. I shall call this school "The Make or Break School," because if you were mentally and physically adaptable you could fit into the vigorous life of the school and get a real kick out of living. If, however, you were a retarded or backward lad then you were just unfortunate, since there was no special training for such pupils.

The winter of 1909, with its heavy falls of snow and severe frost, held no terrors for us. Indeed it would seem that the gods were kindly disposed towards us in providing an opportunity to set ourselves in opposing teams for the purpose of staging set battles in the snow; hurling as much as we could squeeze tightly together in two hands at any fellow in the opposing team. Hatless, coatless, and without gloves, would the healthy boys play this game of snowball, until with perspiring bodies and rosy faces we were glad to direct our strivings into a quieter channel, that of competing in the task of building the biggest snowman, and best snowhouse in which to camp. In short, we were given facilities to engage in vigorous outdoor exercise without the assistance of an official organiser. There were, of course, a number of other outdoor games in which the boys indulged. Some of these were aided by a spot of organisation—football and basket ball chiefly in the winter months, cricket and miniature golf in the summer. The boys for the most part played the games whenever they felt disposed so to do in their free time. Indoor sports included skating, push-ball and wrestling tournaments, which of course were organised and under supervision. The whole point here is, I think, that the boys were given full scope to be natural, and as free in their play as their sighted schoolmates. If a boy wanted stilts on which to walk, then he made himself stilts. The only permit he need acquire was from the master in charge of the wood and tools. I

feel sure this freedom in thought and action was character building, and I would like to know that all blind boys and girls are encouraged to play along the same lines to-day.

It would be a mistake for me to convey the impression that life at this school was fun and games all the time. On the contrary, there was a working day of about six hours and the pupils were expected to tackle their lessons with the same keenness as all other activities.

The curriculum contained the following subjects: Braille, reading and writing, arithmetic, including fractions and decimals, history, with a smattering of political economy, citizenship, including local and national government (the scholars in the top class were encouraged to take active part in debates assisted by the head teacher in the chair), geography, aided by embossed maps and imaginary travel to various parts of the world by boat and train, nature-study, typewriting, carpentry, bendable iron-work, mechanics, and cardboard box-making, chair caning and basketry.

During the summer months lessons were conducted in the open air, usually on the lawn in the shade of a tree. Outside sounds seemed not to interfere with our studies; indeed, the songs of blackbird, thrush and lark gave a background to learning which was extremely pleasant. Visits to museums and places of general interest were a regular feature at this school and the annual trip to the seaside was always a tremendous success.

The reader will rightly conclude that the school possessed a first-rate superintendent and teaching staff. In those days the pupils accepted all that was done for them as a matter of course, but now they have become grown men they place a very high value on what the school training has meant to them. The domestic arrangements were really excellent for an elementary school. The food was plain but wholesome and served without stint. White laundered cloths covered tables at all meals even when the boys partook of a cup of milk and biscuits each night before retiring to bed. Members of the staff took their meals with the boys and Nurses at table with the beginners. Morning and evening prayers were said regularly in the dining-room.

I have done my best to paint a true picture of life at this school as I knew it from the beginning of 1908 to 1911, and I hope the reader has been able to sense the happy and busy atmosphere for the otherwise healthy blind pupil.

Some months prior to the pupil leaving the school he was placed in one of two groups.

Group A were destined to continue their training at an approved college, whilst Group B were considered to be suitable to receive technical training at an approved industrial school. The backward boy just passed out. It was this method of grouping which brought about a live sense of discrimination. You see, if the parents could afford to have their son taught the piano, he was placed in Group A. If, however, the parents were poor then the pupil seldom, if ever, found himself placed in Group A but in Group B, and so destined to take the humbler road to fortune. It was sometimes the case that Group B held the more intellectual pupil, but no matter how brilliant he was as a scholar, unless he possessed some musical attainment, he could not go to a higher school of learning if his parents were poor.

Take the case of my friend "X," who was consistently the brightest pupil of the school—a lad who could solve any ordinary mathematical problem in three minutes, who was more than a match for any member of the staff at the game of chess and who received special commendation in almost every branch of the school's activity. He could not play the piano and so was placed in Group B and considered (wrongly, of course) by Group A as being inferior. My friend "X" accepted the position in some bitterness of spirit and passed on to the Industrial School, where he was expected for a time to attend classes where Braille and very simple arithmetic was taught. He became rebellious, but like the sensible lad he was, conquered his feelings and pleaded his case to the Head so successfully, that he was exempted from attending the classroom, and so received technical training all the time. He did not waste time repining but worked diligently at learning his trade. Soon he became sufficiently qualified to take a job as improver at a distant township, his remuneration being 5s. per week plus board and lodging. The only clothes he possessed when he entered his new job were those in which he stood and a change of under-linen. He was determined, however, to make the best use of his pocket money and for a time saved the bulk of it. He would not smoke nor buy himself sweets, but did manage to make an occasional gift to his mother as a kindly gesture. As one time, he was obliged to work and live in a pair of old house shoes while the only pair of boots he possessed was being repaired. Again he did not repine, but continued to do justice in his job and to train himself for the future work which would give scope to his mental ability. At the age of nineteen he was able to think and talk coherently

about unfair discrimination, but all traces of bitterness had left him.

To-day my friend "X" is playing a prominent part in one of our welfare services and many of the readers of THE NEW BEACON know him well.

Numbers of such cases could be quoted; cases where brilliant boys in Group B are giving good service in our community to-day. Their struggle has been an intense and, in my humble opinion, an unfair one and had it not

been for the splendid build-up they had received whilst at school they would not have stayed the course.

Those of us who have recently witnessed the introduction of the plan for reorganisation of secondary education will rejoice to know that all suitable boys and girls will in the future have an equal opportunity to receive higher education, and will raise our hats to those responsible for bringing the scheme into being.

(To be continued)

HOME NEWS

A Novel Broadcast.—An unusual broadcast on the North American service recently, "calling all bridge-builders," linked blind men and women in England with members of the American Foundation for the Blind. The four "bridge-builders" who took part were Esmond Knight, the well-known actor who lost his sight in a naval action, Mr. Emery, a blind "viewer" employed in an engineering works, Miss Laverty, a telephonist employed at the National Institute for the Blind, and Mr. Wilson, an assistant secretary also working at the National Institute.

Esmond Knight told of the "vivid new world of imagination" in which he had learned to live, and of the men, cheerful and resolute, "living again with renewed vigour" whom he had met at St. Dunstan's. Mr. Emery, who was an engine fitter before he lost his sight, spoke of his pleasure in being back again in the engineering world among familiar things. Miss Laverty gave some account of the blind telephonists who had found work in Government offices and commercial firms and spoke of "business as usual" during the blitz, despite bombed premises and the difficulties of transport. Finally, Mr. Wilson described his work in connection with blind welfare, the problems that war has brought and the new sounds and scents of a wartime city. The Commentator closed the broadcast by inviting those who heard it in America and were themselves blind to write in Braille to the bridge-builders at the B.B.C., telling them of their own achievements, interests, and aims.

Brighton School for Blind Boys and Evacuation.—The following extract from a letter recently received from a member of the staff of the Brighton School for Blind Boys, now evacuated to Upton Hall, Newark, is evidence that the up-rooting from familiar surroundings has its positive value as well as its disadvantages:—

"You will doubtless be interested to know that the children here have settled down quite successfully, and that the change has proved beneficial from almost all points of view. Between £25 and £30 have been earned by them on the farms near, and the farmers have been so satisfied with their work that leaving boys with partial sight have been offered work on the land. The school life is bound up with the communal life of the village, and the senior boys attend socials, dances, and the Youth meetings outside. More freedom is possible here than in Brighton, so for the children evacuation has had some distinct advantages."

Blind War Workers.—Blind persons are doing their bit in war factories, said Col. Arthur Evans, M.P. for Cardiff South, speaking at Cardiff recently, in presenting a cheque on behalf of Cardiff South Conservative Association to local charities for the blind.

On a recent visit to an aircraft factory, he said, he was surprised to see a number of blind men on important work. They told him they had been blinded in the early days of the war. They had been to St. Dunstan's and were glad of the opportunity to contribute their quota to the war effort.

There were hundreds of others working at the bench. At one time such an occupation seemed totally impracticable, but blind men and women, by their inspiring determination to do something useful, had demonstrated the possibilities.

There was now a future for the blind. He had been glad to learn that the employment of the blind in industry after the war was a subject in which the Ministry of Labour and employers of labour were sympathetically interested.

Memorial Gift for the Blind.—A generous gift has been made to provide scholarships for the

blind in memory of the late Harold Adler, second-lieutenant, the Rifle Brigade, who was killed in action in Libya in February, 1942.

The fund, which will accumulate to £7,000 or more, is to be known as the "Harold Adler Scholarship Fund," and though its terms are wide it is to be administered by St. Dunstan's.

The trust deed proposes that St. Dunstan's may apply the interest on the fund to grant scholarships to military or civilian men and women blinded on war service or who become blind from any other cause, to enable them to take up special courses of training at universities, colleges, or other places to fit them for special careers.

Glasgow Speaker Recalls a "Character" of the Napoleonic Wars.—Among the street characters of old Glasgow, who formed the theme of an address by Mr. James Adair (the Procurator-Fiscal) recently, there is probably none whose memory is recalled more vividly by current events than Blind Alick, who, to the accompaniment of his fiddle, announced red-hot news from the front during the Napoleonic Wars.

Regarding the great naval battle of Camper-

down, where Admiral Duncan and his fleet defeated the Dutch in 1797, Alick proclaimed:—

Our cannon they did rattle, lads,
And we knocked their topmasts down;
But the particulars you will hear
By the post in the afternoon.

Alick was poetically proud of his native city:—

I've travelled all the world over,
And many a place beside;
But I never saw a more beautiful city
Than this on the navigable river of Clyde.

Court Grange Guides Greet Lady Baden-Powell.—Newton Abbot and District Girl Guides gave a floral "welcome" to Lady Baden-Powell, the Chief Guide, on February 27th, when she visited them at Highweek Senior Girls' School.

The parade was a large one, and among the assembly was a contingent of blind Guides from the Court Grange School at Abbotskerswell.

Herts Society for the Blind: Change of Address.—The address of the Hertfordshire Society for the Blind is now Farthings, Much Hadham, Herts. Tel.: Much Hadham 115.

"THE ART OF SEEING" By ALDOUS HUXLEY

Reviewed by a well-known authority.

THERE are more than 500 possible causes of defective sight, and Mr. Huxley has written a muddled little book about the two he happens to know of, keratitis and ocular neurosis. It is surprising that so brilliant a satirist should have so naïvely exposed his susceptibility to propaganda. He has fallen a victim to the skilfully applied suggestion of an old and Yoga-like system of mental and physical exercises well known to all ophthalmic surgeons, since a high proportion of their patients have tried them unsuccessfully before seeking advice. The initial fallacy of this "Bates System" lies in its failure to differentiate between organic disease and disorder of function due to mental causes. Mr. Huxley himself had suffered at the age of 16 from a severe attack of keratitis (an organic disease) which left him with a defect of sight not great enough to prevent him reading. He subsequently developed a sense of strain and a great and unjustifiable fear of impending blindness. At the age of 49 (when it is normal to experience a change in the focus of the eyes) this mental worry became intolerable, until it

was removed and his confidence restored by this American system, which is based on the stimulation of the patient's imagination and the inculcation of self-control by means of purely arbitrary "exercises in the art of seeing." These exercises, described in detail by Mr. Huxley, have no particular effect other than the state of mind they induce. They aim at persuading the patient that he sees better than he thought he did, and can use his eyes more than he thought he could. No proof is given of any measurable improvement based on accurate testing, and it is admitted that a very much brighter light was used for reading after than before the treatment.

So much for the mental side which is at least comprehensible. What is, however, dangerous is the attitude adopted that all diseases of the eyes, including glaucoma, cataract, iritis and retinal detachment, will be benefited by this treatment. The fact that millions of people with good sight to-day would have been blind had not ophthalmic surgeons studied the anatomy, physiology and pathology of the eye, in order to work out logical methods of treatment, is utterly ignored. The dangerous doctrine of a panacea for all eye diseases, which

is on a par with the search for an Elixir of Life, leads to serious neglect of warning symptoms, and organic diseases in their early stages curable are ignored until it is too late.

The book is crammed with inaccuracies. Among other treatments the sufferer from eye strain is exhorted to look at the sun and is assured that though temporary blindness may result, this is never permanent. The author of this review has seen three cases in the last three months in which a permanent defect of sight was caused by watching a partial eclipse of the sun. It is also stated that patients with eye strain stare for long periods without blinking. It is physiologically impossible for anyone (unless unconscious) to keep the eyes open without blinking. Blinking occurs quite involuntarily every three seconds or so and is unconnected with errors of refraction. About these latter Mr. Huxley has peculiar ideas. He does not know that such errors are anatomical and follow a certain course which is entirely uninfluenced by the wearing of glasses or the doing of exercises. It is entirely false to say that the wearing of glasses increases the error of refraction. The refraction of the eye often does change, but this is never due to the wearing of glasses. Mr. Huxley mentions squint, but is apparently unaware of the existence of a scientifically sound system of exercises for the amelioration of squint and the perfecting of binocular vision, defects of which are well

known to be curable by exercises, but which he does not deal with at all.

He gives a number of rules, such as: Do not stare, do not frown, do not forget to blink, expose the eyes to the sun, hang a calendar on the wall and frequently glance at it when doing close work, shut your eyes at the end of each sentence when reading, and give up a part of each day to palming the eyes, giving "flashing glances," and swaying and swinging the body and head slowly from side to side. We rather envy Mr. Huxley so much spare time!

We find it hard to forgive the advice that the Bates System should be tried on children in preference to having them examined by an ophthalmologist. This would inevitably increase the number of blind eyes in the world, since so many disorders of the eyes in children are amenable to treatment if taken early, but become permanent if neglected.

There is no limit to the credulity of the human race, and though in most cases the common sense of the reader will come to the rescue, yet a few will continue in their search for magic and by so doing will jeopardise one of their most precious possessions. We are surprised that Mr. Huxley should have so completely forgotten how dangerous is a little knowledge—in this case, of psychology, since there is no evidence in the book of any knowledge at all of physics or of ophthalmology.

FLATLETS FOR THE BLIND

THE problem of Homes for the Blind is many-sided. There are the aged and infirm who need nursing and attendance, there are the able-bodied who have no families with whom to live but who appreciate community life, and there are those other able-bodied people who find living in lodgings depressing, but who like more independence and freedom than can reasonably be achieved in an ordinary Home, with its common-room and its shared bedrooms. A few years ago Virginia Woolf wrote of "A Room of One's Own" and this is what most of us long for. However delightfully equipped a Home may be, and however excellent are its amenities, there are many of us who want some little corner that is our very own, with a door that we can shut against the intruder and open for our own particular friends.

It was a recognition of this which led the Essex Voluntary Association for the Blind to

open a hostel at Leytonstone, where eight blind women have single bed-sitting rooms and a ninth shares a double room with a seeing friend. The Chairman and Committee of the Association gave encouragement and support to their home teacher, Miss Hayter, who was responsible for putting forward the suggestion of such a hostel and has brought to the work vision, enthusiasm and a refusal to be deterred by difficulties. Suitable premises were eventually found in a former Masonic building.

It is a substantially built house, standing well back from a quiet suburban road, and having a large garden in its rear. No elaborate structural alterations were needed to adapt it for its present purpose, the most important being the relaying and extension of gas-pipes in order to enable gas-cookers to be installed in each of the rooms. The total cost of adaptation was under £150, a modest figure which was made possible by the enlistment of voluntary help and interest in

Leytonstone. Men from a local Rest Centre, members of Toc H and A.R.P. workers came forward, and gave help in cleaning and distempering the rooms, while the Women's Voluntary Services undertook the making of black-out curtains. Gifts of furniture were also received.

The "flatlet" note is struck as one enters the hall and sees the neat letter-rack for the residents' correspondence, and each tenant behind her door is as safe from intrusion as the ordinary flat-owner. There is a resident caretaker who is responsible for the cleaning of passages and staircase, and she can be called upon in the event of sickness or special need, while the home teacher visits the hostel almost daily, and is on call to cope with emergencies. Each resident has her own coal supply, stacked down in the cellar in her own private bunker, and there is a communal first floor pantry where washing-up can be done and kettles filled. Hot baths are provided at a small charge, but one bath per week is allowed free of charge.

In the main the residents have furnished their own rooms, and the house is fortunate in being exceptionally well supplied with roomy fitted cupboards. Some help towards furnishing has been given where would-be tenants, otherwise suitable, had not their own furniture. There are coal fires in the rooms in addition to the gas-cookers, and although the residents do their own cooking during the week arrangements are made for the caretaker to prepare the Sunday dinner, which is served in the common-room. Each tenant cleans and cares for her own room, and individuality is encouraged; some have divan beds which become couches by day, and washstands can be concealed. One of the residents, a woman in the late thirties who has been living since she was a child in a Poor Law Institution, is now rejoicing in her emancipation and shows with great delight the green and orange colour scheme of her bright little room. Another, totally deaf as well as blind and now learning by slow degrees the one-handed manual alphabet, has a mantelpiece bright with charming colour prints. On the ground floor, one of the residents has a room large enough to enable her to give music lessons; she studied at the Royal Academy of Music and holds the L.R.A.M. and A.R.C.M. (violin) diplomas. Her musical talents and her readiness to use them in the common good are a valuable asset. Upstairs, another of the tenants is an expert shorthand-typist and a former student of the Royal Normal College; she works in an office not far from the hostel.

In order that the residents may have some of the amenities of a residential club, there is a large common-room on the ground floor, where communal activities of all kinds are held, and it serves not only for those living at the hostel but for the blind of the neighbourhood. Here, under the direction of the home teacher, a class for the deaf-blind is held on one afternoon, a handicraft class on another, a social on a third. Already there are plans afoot for the future. Musical recitals, classes in musical appreciation, a literary discussion group, a handyman's class for blind men, and cookery classes for the residents and for others interested are already in progress or are being arranged. As the days lengthen, the garden is to be brought into the picture and the tenants are planning to grow their own vegetables.

Financially, the future of the hostel is promising. The residents are in a position to pay rent, for they are either earning or are in receipt of domiciliary assistance; and the rents, which range from 12s. a week for the double room down to 8s., 7s. 6d. and 6s. 6d. for the smaller rooms, inclusive of electric light and the services of the caretaker, should enable the Committee to meet the rent and rates of the house, which amount to about £150 p.a.

The Leytonstone hostel is a fine experiment, and it is one which readers of THE NEW BEACON will wish may meet with continued success. Local homes on such general lines would do much to solve the problem of the lonely blind.

PERSONALIA

The former Secretary of the Leeds Incorporated Institution for the Blind and the Deaf and Dumb, Mr. W. P. SWANN, is now Principal of the Yorkshire School for the Blind.

* * *

WILLIAM NEILL, M.A., Mus. Doc., a former student of the Royal School for the Blind, Edinburgh, and a distinguished blind musician, who studied in Paris under M. Marcel Dupré, has been appointed to an important post on the music staff of the Royal Normal College for the Blind. He is at present at a Glasgow church, where he has a fine record as choir-master as well as organist.

* * *

MRS. BAKER, of Romford, who is blind but in good health, recently celebrated her 100th birthday. She is the only survivor of a family of eleven, and has lived in Romford ever since her marriage, more than 70 years ago.

WAR-TIME EMPLOYMENT BULLETIN-II.

IN the January issue of THE NEW BEACON a survey was given of the results achieved in the war-time employment campaign.

Since that date the number of known placements has increased to 794 and, in view of the fact that recent returns have not been received from many areas, and that many blind people continue to find work for themselves which is not always recorded on the return, it is reasonable to assume that the thousand figure has now been well passed.

There remain, however, striking differences in achievement between different areas with apparently similar industrial possibilities, and it is obvious that only in a very few areas has there been anything like a total mobilisation of competent blind labour. It is fair to say that sufficient evidence is now available to convince any reasonable employer, who has suitable processes in his plant; that it is to his advantage under present conditions to take on blind labour. The point need scarcely be stressed that it is also to the advantage of every agency in the country, and of the blind themselves, to secure total mobilisation of all competent blind manpower. To put the case on its lowest grounds, as most of those who have secured work were previously in receipt of domiciliary assistance, the rates will be saved at least £50,000 next year. Nor is there likely again to be such a chance of proving the industrial competence of the blind, and this fact alone is sufficient to justify those concerned with blind welfare, in spite of the many difficulties of war-time administration, in giving first priority to this campaign.

Undoubtedly there are difficulties, not the least of which is the fact that many agencies have not, on their staff, anyone with the technical knowledge to make full use of the industrial possibilities in their area. An employment brochure, "Skilled Hands of the Blind," which has been published by the National Institute, should help to solve this difficulty. More than 4,000 copies of this pamphlet have been distributed to every agency for the blind and to every employment exchange in the country and, through the co-operation of the Ministry of Aircraft Production, to all the largest aircraft production firms. Additional copies can be obtained free of charge from the Institute.

In this connection, the services of the Institute's Employment Officer will gladly be placed at the disposal of any agency which requires technical advice as to the selection of processes suitable for the blind.

It is, however, regrettable that not all agencies have yet made full use of the regional and local placement machinery of the Ministry of Labour. Until recently, less than 1 per cent. of the blind population in the London and S.E. Region of the Ministry of Labour had effected and maintained registration at local employment exchanges. Responsibility for this apathetic response cannot fairly be ascribed to the blind themselves. Undoubtedly there are some who prefer to recline on high rates of domiciliary assistance, and some who are not prepared to take the risk of losing their Disability Pension; but anyone who is in close contact with the blind cannot fail to have been impressed by the fact that the great majority of blind people are eager to do war work.

The Ministry of Labour is interested in this campaign, and its local offices will welcome all suitable blind applicants. If there is no work in the locality, and the blind applicant is prepared to move, the exchange will pass on his name to an area where there is a job to be had. In such an event, it might speed up placement if the name of the applicant were also sent to the National Institute, which is constantly receiving requests from employers willing to take on blind labour.

An incident of the general campaign is that, in recent months, there has been an increased demand for blind telephonists. The Northern Counties Association has already placed many operators and, through co-operation with the Post Office authorities, hopes to train and place many more. All those who have passed out from the National Institute's training establishment at Bridgnorth have been found satisfactory positions immediately on completion of their training. In recent months, 14 blind telephonists have been given work on employment exchange switchboards in the London and S.E. Region of the Ministry of Labour and National Service. This class of placement is particularly desirable as it will give the blind operators a chance of continuing in good employment after the war.

THE RAINBOW OF THE DEAF-BLIND

By ARTHUR R. SCULTHORPE

Editor of "The Braille Rainbow."

THE Rainbow is a symbol of hope for the deaf-blind; but a symbol, unaccompanied by practical efforts to realise that hope, is of little value. So *The Rainbow* is not only a symbol, it is a tool; it is essentially a working magazine.

To the great majority of people, outside and inside the deaf-blind community, it is accepted that the dual handicap must, of necessity, result in the isolation of the deaf-blind; that they are cut off; that the only thing to do about it is to try to make their condition as comfortable as possible.

But to a few, this thesis is *not* accepted. They refuse to admit that deaf-blindness must of necessity mean isolation. They believe ardently that the deaf-blind can be brought back into the life of the normal community. They preach that "These things need not be, should not be, and *must* not be."

The cause of the deaf-blind is new ground. Only comparatively recently has any specialised attention been concentrated on it. The present deaf-blind are the product of a very casual and uninformed system. Most of them have had to take their chance with the hearing-blind, and pick up what they can in competition with others who have not their handicap to contend with. That many of them have succeeded in attaining an astonishing degree of normality is a wonder in itself and a great achievement on their part—but it is only now that the realisation of a special need and a special technique is at last dawning on those in authority.

The very first essential, in the formulation of a policy aimed at the improvement of conditions for the deaf-blind, is that those responsible for that work shall have *first-hand and accurate knowledge of the people they seek to help*. This knowledge can only be obtained from the deaf-blind themselves. It cannot be obtained unless the deaf-blind will speak out, frankly and without reserve, of their difficulties, their ways of thought, the help they need—in short, of *themselves*.

The Rainbow has a definite purpose. It is not merely a pleasant bit of reading. It is a tool: a lever by which the deaf-blind shall help to lift themselves up. Its stated aims are: "To provide a medium through which the deaf-blind can express themselves" and "To interest the public on their behalf." "To express themselves" does not mean simply

"to write letters"; it means what it says—to express *themselves*; their whole thoughts, ideas, opinions; to be free to say their say. The deaf-blind are not children. They are grown-up men and women. Many of them have lived a normal life until they became deaf-blind. They have a right to state their opinions. By so doing they reveal themselves, they give information about themselves: and it is *The Rainbow's* policy to see that the people outside the deaf-blind community learn those opinions. It is the editor's job to co-ordinate the information so gathered and to put it in compact form for the information of those who are anxious to learn all they can about the deaf-blind.

So that the main space of *The Rainbow* consists of letters from readers. Discussion of their ideas and opinions is definitely encouraged. Such letters are valuable. Criticism is right and proper, so long as it conforms to the rules of debate.

The work of *The Rainbow* is the primary consideration, therefore, in the selection of matter in its pages. Letters and articles likely to forward that work take precedence over general interest and entertainment. These latter are catered for in the mass of Braille magazines which are available to the blind and deaf-blind alike.

But since the life of the deaf-blind must be shown in all its aspects, the amusements and interests of the readers have their place too. It is *The Rainbow's* policy to encourage a wider interest in outside affairs.

There is beauty in the pages of *The Rainbow*—the beauty of simple people, holding up against a fate which is terrible in the extreme; a beauty of deeper significance than any artistry of words. The beauty of *The Rainbow* shines out in its accomplishments. When we can point to a happier deaf-blind community and say "*The Rainbow* has done its share in this," then *The Rainbow* will be "a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

It is not possible at present to issue a letterpress edition of *The Rainbow*. A typed copy of "Extracts" is issued to each Associate Member of the National Deaf-Blind Helpers' League, of which particulars can be obtained from the Gen. Sec., Mrs. L. Johnson, 40 Green Road, Hall Green, Birmingham 28.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—

William H. Tate, J.P., of Bradford, aged 95. An appreciation of Mr. Tate appears below.

Francis H. Merrick, of Shepperton, on Feb. 25th, at the age of 71. Mr. Merrick was lame from boyhood, and his sight, never very good, failed him completely when he was still in the twenties. He had read an article on the work of Louis Braille, and characteristically applied to William Whiteley, the "Universal Provider," for books and apparatus. Whiteley's got into touch with the British and Foreign Blind Association (now the National Institute for the Blind) and before long Mr. Merrick was an accomplished Brailist, and probably the first Englishman to write Braille with a machine; he copied many volumes with it for the National Library for the Blind, working from his father's dictation.

Mr. Merrick will be gratefully remembered by a large number of blind men and women as the Editor of the Chess Supplement to *Progress*; he was entirely responsible for this feature for over forty years, and held strongly the view that as chess is one of the few games in which the blind player can meet the seeing on terms of complete equality, it should be widely encouraged. He made the Braille chess notation conform as nearly as possible to that used in printed chess literature, so that the blind player could get friends with a knowledge of Braille to copy problems for him even without knowledge of the game. He devised the Merrick chess-board and men and the Merrick Braille board, and compiled the book *First Steps in Chess*, for the beginner. He only decided that he must discontinue the Chess Supplement owing to failing health a short time before his death.

The sympathy of our readers will be extended to Mrs. Merrick who, ever since their marriage in 1917, had shared his interests and entered enthusiastically into all his work for the blind.

Their sympathy will also go out to Mr. W. P. Merrick, a valued member of the National Institute's Council, who has lost in his brother someone whose cheerfulness and humour, in spite of frequent pain, made him a delightful companion.

Earl Fitzwilliam, who died at Wentworth-Woodhouse, Yorkshire, on February 15th. He succeeded to the title in 1902, and took a keen interest in county affairs in south Yorkshire. He became a Vice-President of the National Institute for the Blind in 1917.

Arthur Greenwood, at Doncaster. Mr. Greenwood was a trustee of the Child Memorial Home for the Blind, of the Wakefield Home for the Blind and the Wakefield and District Institution for the Blind, and a valued member of the Committee of the last-named from 1912 to 1943. In him the blind have lost a kind and loyal friend, and his colleagues one whose judgment was sound and practical. In addition to his activities in connection with blind welfare, he had long experience of other public work and charitable interests, and from 1890 to 1917 was a member of the Wakefield Board of Guardians.

Mrs. Barrass, of Edmonton, at the age of 83. For fifty years Mrs. Barrass took part in the public life of Edmonton, and at the time of her death was an alderman of the Edmonton Council; for the last 15 years she had been blind, but did not allow this to interfere with her activities.

The Very Rev. Griffiths Roberts, Dean of Bangor from 1903 to 1934. Despite his advanced age of 97, Dean Roberts had enjoyed good health up to quite recently and he was very active.

He was a prominent worker for the North Wales Society for the Blind.

Rudolf Wydenbach, for many years sales representative of the Swansea and South Wales Institute for the Blind.

W. H. TATE : AN APPRECIATION

IT would be easy in writing an appreciation of Mr. Tate's work in relation to blind welfare to make an imposing list of the Committees upon which he served during the seventy years of his long life in which he made the blind his chief concern. He had been Chairman of the Royal Institution for the Blind

at Bradford; a member of the Committee of the Bradford Royal Eye and Ear Hospital; for years a member of the Northern Counties Association for the Blind; one of the earliest members of the Ministry of Health Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind; a member of the Executive of the College of

Teachers of the Blind, Vice-President, one of its Fellows, and on the Examining Board for the Home Teachers' examination; from 1929 to 1940 he served on the General Purposes Committee of the National Institute for the Blind and for a number of years as member of its Executive Council; he was one of the first members of the Consultative Committee on the Deaf-Blind; he was on the Executive Committee of the Union of Counties Associations for the Blind. No Committee member ever worked more conscientiously to acquaint himself with every aspect of the problems which came up for consideration, none ever read Minutes or Memoranda with greater care, and his own beautifully-written letters swelled countless files of correspondence. He was able and far-seeing and advocated many of the reforms which have come about in blind welfare long before they were envisaged by his colleagues on Committee and Council. More than forty years ago he read a paper at a Conference convened by Gardner's Trust, in which he pleaded for the establishment of a national central register of the blind, and urged the setting up of a Central Bureau to co-ordinate all blind welfare services. He was a pioneer in the task of abolishing blind mendicancy in Bradford.

The welfare of the blind was not, however, his only interest. He was a notable musician and held several appointments in past years as Church organist. He took an active part in the musical life of his native city, acting as honorary secretary of its Festival Choral Society, serving as choir-master of the Royal Bradford Institution for the Blind for over forty years, training many choirs for musical festivals, teaching singing in a girls' school and at one time acting as conductor of an amateur orchestral society. He was keenly interested in the welfare of the young, and for some time Chairman of the Juvenile Court at Bradford, only retiring from this office owing to increasing age in 1936.

But a list of all the Committees upon which Mr. Tate served with so much ability and of all the offices he filled is inadequate to express what he was, or to explain why the reporter of the *Bradford Telegraph and Argus* began the announcement of his death with the words—"One of Bradford's most dearly-loved figures died to-day." Serving on Committees and being "dearly-loved" do not necessarily go together, though in the case of the friend whom we have lost they assuredly did.

It was impossible to come into contact with his burning enthusiasm, his eagerness to help, his fine courtesy and his spirit of loving-kindness

without feeling ashamed of one's own sloth and careless acceptance of things as they are. Sometimes we were guilty—may we be forgiven—of slight impatience when, as an old man, he talked on at Committees (with a blissful disregard of trains to be caught or meals to be eaten), and urged possible improvements in Moon type or pleaded the cause of his beloved deaf-blind. But even when we were thus impatient we recognised in him a single-hearted champion of the rights of those least able to fight for themselves, and a shining goodness:—

"He hath a daily beauty in his life
That makes me ugly."

we said with Iago.

He was one of those good men of whom all his friends will have many happy personal memories. On the great day in 1937 when he was awarded the O.B.E. for his services to the blind he hurried from Buckingham Palace to attend a meeting of the College of Teachers. On the way he was knocked down by a taxi (no trifling matter when one is eighty-eight) and was persuaded, though not without difficulty, to lie down for half an hour. Meticulously he insisted on spreading a newspaper over the couch, lest his boots should mark it, and then handed over coat, hat and attaché case to be "minded," but firmly refused to relinquish the little leather case that contained his new-won honour, and lay down with it happily clasped in his hand, rather like a child with a favourite toy.

He had a serene religious faith, and it was one that had nothing sectarian about it. "If at any time circumstances made it impossible for me to worship in a Christian church," he said one day to a friend, "I think that I should find great blessing in a Jewish synagogue."

Of what his life of service meant to the most handicapped and best-loved of all his friends, the deaf-blind, it is difficult to say. More and more as the years passed they absorbed his attention and his time, and he spent many hours writing to them in Braille. "We *must* reach them; they are souls in prison" he would say. "The best man in the world" was the description given of him by one deaf, blind and paralysed woman to whom he had brought friendship and renewed hope. When that other friend of the blind and deaf, Dr. Eichholz, died a few years ago, the noble words from the book of Job were quoted at the Memorial Service:—"I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame. I was a father to the poor; and the cause of him I knew not I searched out." They seem to be equally appropriate to-day when we remember with gratitude the life and work of Mr. Tate.

PERMANENT PLACEMENTS

WE are indebted to Dr. Whitfield for forwarding to us an interesting letter which appears in our Correspondence Columns, under cover of one from Dr. Whitfield himself. It was written to him by Mr. J. F. Clunk, now Chief of the Services for the Blind Section of the United States Office of Education, and formerly National Supervisor of Industrial Employment for the Canadian National Institute for the Blind. Mr. Clunk is himself blind, and there is probably no one who can speak with greater authority than he on the question of placement; he has an inside knowledge of the problem, extending over many years.

At the World Conference on Work for the Blind in 1931, Mr. Clunk led the discussion that followed a paper by Captain Baker on Placement, and in addressing the delegates said:—"After-care is absolutely essential . . . Detailed intensive after-care is only insurance to protect and perpetuate the opportunities for which you have laboured so hard."

In another column of this month's **NEW BEACON** it is stated that already known placements of blind people in sighted warwork have increased to 794, and as many blind people are finding work for themselves not always recorded, the 1,000 figure has almost certainly been passed. This is an extraordinarily good beginning, and one which has probably exceeded the most optimistic dreams of the promoters of the campaign. Of course war-time conditions have presented an opportunity which has never occurred before, as during the last war (in pre-Blind Persons' Act days) there was no machinery of blind welfare to make placement on such a scale possible. It is essential if the present opportunity is to be used to the full, that the blind who have found employment shall so dig themselves in and prove their worth that, though they may be among the latest to be absorbed, they shall not, when the demand declines, be among the first to be discharged. It is in this connection that Mr. Clunk's words are relevant. Mere placement is not enough. It is the holding-down of jobs that counts.

The After-Care Association for Blind, Deaf and Crippled Children, which has a forty-years' record for the placement of L.C.C. children from Special Schools (not, however, including the blind in recent years) had, and probably still has, a sound rule by which no placement which lasted less than a month might be included in the Association's statistical returns. Little Tommy, who hustled blithely from job to job, losing four in as many weeks—leaving the first because he had cheeked the foreman, and the second because in his view the foreman had cheeked him, the third for bad time-keeping, and the fourth because potatoes in their jackets were given him in the canteen—was not allowed to count as four placements, or even as one. Not until young Tommy had sown his wild oats and settled down was he allowed to swell the Association's records of work done.

True, the After-Care Association was dealing with the young and irresponsible, while the organisation for the blind is concerned with the grown man or woman, who is older and wiser and knows that jobs are not to be had for the asking, even in war-time, and is therefore not nearly so likely to throw up a post for a frivolous reason. The sensible blind person recognises his handicap, and knows that though he may be able to do a factory job as well, or even better, than his sighted neighbour at the bench he must prove this, and overcome the prejudices of employer and fellow-worker.

The agency which places a blind man or woman at warwork cannot therefore wash its hands of them. Each person placed must be watched, and everything possible must be done to make their job as straightforward as possible. An effort must be made to see that they get to work with as little difficulty as may be, so that when they reach the bench they may be fresh and energetic. Small adjustments that can be made at the bench itself to help the blind worker to give better service must be thought of. Of course with all this, the employer who has plenty of bigger things to worry about in these days must not be teased with over-fussy supervision by the agency for the blind, and the blind worker accepted for employment must be prepared to take some of the rough and tumble that is the lot of his fellow workers.

With all this, however, the statement in Mr. Clunk's letter that "the agency must relieve the employer of the emotional stresses to which he is subjected when it is necessary to discipline a blind worker or to change his place of employment" must be borne in mind; it makes it clear that in the view of this most successful of blind men in "selling" blind labour, the agency for the blind has a big part to play in achieving permanent placements.

THE EDITOR.

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION”

By W. H. COATES

III.—On the Road

WALKING alone in the streets of a busy town turned out to be a much more difficult and hazardous matter for Tom, than walking about his quiet native by-ways. It was not so much the crowds of people—streaming up and down, cutting across the path, suddenly stopping, standing silent in the middle of the pavement, sauntering in twos and threes: that was a bit confusing; but the main trouble was the great noise. He felt sure it was the noise. It befogged him. It took away his power of picking out landmarks by which to steer his steps. If there came a momentary lull in the traffic, he was able to stroll along quite easily and confidently, just as he could at home. The position of shop-windows and entrances, of lamp-posts, of walls and railings, of stationary cars in the gutter and of sun-blinds overhead—all were distinctly indicated to him without contact as he passed. Then the trams and lorries would come thundering down again, and boom!—bang!—everything was gone. It was like magic. The world was suddenly changed from a well-defined arrangement of solid objects to an amorphous flood of noise. Safe navigation through such a stormy sea only became possible after an arduous and sometimes painful apprenticeship.

Not until now, when he began to have difficulty with it, did he pay any attention to this queer faculty which informed him of the presence and location of bulky objects. How it worked he could not tell. It gave him an impression of solidity which was as vivid as though he had touched the object with his hands. Yet the impression had not quite the quality of a tactual sensation. Nor could he recognise in it the nature of any of his other senses. Could it be that some entirely new sense-organ was hidden about him somewhere?

He thought he would experiment a bit. Muffling up head and face in a cloak, he started on a tour of the house. After hurting his ribs on the corner of a cupboard and upsetting a chair, he walked into a closed door, and finally almost broke his neck down some stairs. That satisfied him that the organ concerned was somewhere in

the head region. Next, head and face were draped in a thick towel, folded so that the ears alone were free. The only effect of this arrangement was to make his face very hot. Thirdly, leaving head and face bare, he stuffed his fingers hard into his earholes, and began to walk round and round the room—his own room. After a rather rough passage of several minutes, he stood still, and said to himself: “I am facing the window.” He found that in fact he was facing the bookcase, and even that not squarely. “It’s obvious,” said Tom, “that I’m a pretty poor fish without my ears.”

This remark was the starting-point of his theories about the nature and action of the “blind man’s eyes.” The foundation of the structure was the conclusion drawn from the foregoing experiments, endorsed by the evidence of his experience in heavy traffic—that the faculty was inseparable from the sense of hearing. It would be as incredible to a physiologist that two different senses should use the same organ as that a new organ should be formed, regularly under given conditions, in answer to need. The most scientific-looking explanation that the amateur could see was that the faculty was a special modification of hearing itself. We need not appeal to text-books to confirm the well-known belief that special environments are met by special adaptations in the individual affected. The clerk who turns navvy will develop horny hands and strong arms. The point is that these adaptations are made by changes in existing organs, not by the invention of new ones.

Tom then went on to investigate how it worked. He already knew that sometimes it didn’t. It didn’t work in the midst of a great noise. He found, too, that it was useless in dead silence. There must be a moderate volume of sound before it could operate; and the sound which (for him) suited it best was the sharp intermittent rap of footsteps. If anything muffled the sound of his steps, such as fresh snow, thick turf, rubber soles, the sense was blunted or even extinguished; just as it was in the town when the steps were inaudible owing to the traffic. This seemed reasonable, seeing that the sound of one’s footsteps is the sound most often present when the sense is in use. Other sounds

would serve, especially staccato, repetitive ones like the clapping of one's hands; but nothing gave such a good result as footsteps—his own footsteps: not footsteps at a distance.

It appeared, then, that solid objects modified sound in some way? Certainly: they threw an echo. Everyone is familiar with echoes, but these were so nearly simultaneous with the parent sound that only a specialised ear could distinguish them from it. That explained why things like a man or a heavy curtain, having a soft absorbent surface, gave a fainter impression than hard substances. The relationship between the original sound and its echo was picked up and conveyed to the auditory apparatus, reaching consciousness eventually as a sensation of substance and solidity—qualities which could hardly be less characteristic of ordinary sound.

Perhaps it was due in some way to the influence of the sense of touch—to a kind of fusing or inter-percolation of two different sensations belonging to the same conception. If so, it would be a kind of intimate association, not of ideas, but of sensations.

Supposing these theories to be true, and supposing that sound-waves travelled at the rate of approximately 1,100 ft. per second, Tom worked out in a rough calculation how minute a period a trained ear could distinguish. His result showed that if a blind man passed an object at a distance of one yard, the echo of his footsteps reflected from that object would strike upon his ear only one two-hundredth or two-hundred-and-fiftieth of a second after the original sound.

(To be continued)

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Information Wanted.

SIR,—May I be allowed, through you, to thank the many secretaries and managers of Institutions and Societies for the Blind in the British Isles for the information that they have sent me regarding activities for work on behalf of the blind in their respective neighbourhoods during the twelve-year period 1931-42. As I am anxious to complete the second volume of the "Chronology on Work for the Blind," I shall be very grateful for any further information that is available being sent soon.

In recording any new development it is helpful to say in which year it took place.

Yours, etc.,

HENRY J. WAGG.

19-21, Crawford Street,
London, W.1.

To the Editor.

Domiciliary Assistance.

SIR,—I was interested to see in THE NEW BEACON that a question had been asked in the House of Commons about the use of relieving officers for investigating the circumstances of applicants for blind domiciliary assistance and the payment of grants, but I was very disappointed to find that Mr. E. Brown had no authority to stop this.

As I pointed out before, when the payment of grants by relieving officers was started in the district which I serve, it seemed to me that this

was in direct opposition to the spirit of the Blind Persons Act, which was to remove blind persons from the purview of Public Assistance. It is all very well to say that the use of relieving officers for these purposes does not imply that the assistance given is given as poor relief, but how are the blind person's neighbours to know this when they see the relieving officer calling regularly at the house?

Granted that under present circumstances it may be impossible to alter the system where it is already in use, surely someone must have authority to stop it spreading to any further districts and seeing that it is abolished when times are easier?

Yours, etc.,

W. M. D.

To the Editor.

Employment Problems.

SIR,—A passage in a communication published by you in your November issue particularly attracted my attention and induced me to inquire into its accuracy. As a consequence I have received a letter from Mr. J. F. Clunk, who, as many of your readers will remember, was for many years the very successful National Supervisor of Employment at the Canadian N.I.B. Mr. Clunk is now Chief of Services for the Blind under the Federal Government at Washington. I am enclosing his letter as I think it of importance in connection with our employment problems in Britain, and should do much to dispel the effects of your correspondent's harmful pessimism.

May I take this opportunity of drawing the attention of your readers to the great advance the British agencies for the blind, on the whole, have still to make in their attitude towards putting blind persons on their own staffs? The advertisements for sighted home teachers which appear in your publication in themselves constitute depressing reading in a country where all home teachers (in spite of far greater difficulties than in England) and a very high percentage of departmental heads are blind.

Yours, etc.,

ERNEST WHITFIELD.

Ontario, Canada.

Mr. Clunk's letter to Dr. Whitfield is as follows:—

DEAR DR. WHITFIELD,

Your letter of January 28th is just received in which you quote the following:—

"How much importance should we attach to the result of thirty years' experience in the United States, which suggests that when an employer has had a blind worker and that worker has been released, the employer will not consider employing another, therefore the placing of one blind person serves only that individual for a short space of time, and upon termination the community has one less open-minded employer who can be approached?"

Undoubtedly the writer or speaker to whom you refer was reading from a report of my own, or it may have been a convention paper because the language is mine. However, this unknown friend should complete the statement and present the subject as I have always presented it when making that statement. The statement is absolutely correct as far as it goes and that result is always obtained when agencies for the blind refuse to recognise their permanent responsibility for the employer-employee relationship and provide adequate after-care supervision to keep the employer's goodwill.

I have never made the statement referred to without explaining the cure for that result. This cure has its demonstration all over Canada where we applied the principles of permanent after-care supervision when we began a placement campaign in 1928. As a result of that procedure, sighted employers of blind persons have continued to employ blind persons regardless of how many fail and regardless of economic conditions. The records will show that we made placements through the depression and that our blind workers were the last to be laid off in the bottom of the depression. Permanent

responsibility on the part of the placement agents is the answer and the agency must relieve the employer of the emotional stresses to which he is subjected when it is necessary to discipline a blind worker or to change his place of employment. Agencies which refuse to recognise this permanent responsibility always blame the ultimate failure of placement work on blind persons or on the alleged hard-hearted unsympathetic sighted employer. This attempted dodging of responsibility does not correct the situation and it does not relieve the agency for the blind of its responsibility for the unsatisfactory results.

To-day we have over 400 blind men and women working in war industries and every placement is based upon the permanent responsibility of the placement agency, and this procedure corrects the situation which is described in that statement and which only exists with workers for the blind who insist upon selling blind labour on a compassionate instead of a business basis. You are at liberty to quote this letter in whole or in part.

Very truly yours,

(signed) J. F. CLUNK,

Chief, Services for the Blind.

Federal Security Agency,
U.S. Office of Education,
Washington.

To the Editor.

Homes for the Blind.

SIR,—I have been very interested in the article and correspondence regarding the provision of residential homes for the blind. It appears to me that the shortage of accommodation must be confined to certain regions. The Wakefield District Institution for the Blind opened its premises at 29, Peterson Road, Wakefield, as a residential home for blind women last year, and in the home we are avoiding any suggestion of Institution life. It is furnished, and the residents behave precisely as they would in their own homes with practically no restrictions. We feed, clothe and maintain every resident for a total inclusive charge of 25s. per week, out of which we return to them 2s. per week pocket money.

At the moment we have exactly *one resident*; hence my doubts regarding the alleged shortage of accommodation. I may say at this juncture that we are prepared to accept, as residents, blind or partially blind persons (women), who are otherwise in good health, from any district in the country.

I agree that Wakefield is not generally

regarded as a health resort, but the home is in pleasant surroundings with a good private garden where residents may spend their time when the weather permits. Applications for accommodation from any of your readers will be welcomed and sympathetically considered.

Yours, etc.,

J. L. SIMPSON,
Secretary, Wakefield District
Institution for the Blind.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Mustard Gas and the Eyes.

Study of Mustard Gas Lesions of the Eyes of Rabbits and Men (Ida Mann, D.Sc., and B.D. Pullinger, M.D.) is a reprint from the *Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine*, January, 1942. Mustard gas was first used by the Germans at Ypres in 1917, but owing to the large number of casualties and absence of facilities for minute eye examination little research in the matter was possible at the time. However, after 1935 interest was revived by cases of recurrent ulceration of the cornea in men who had been subjected to mustard gas attacks ten to twenty years previously. Careful case-histories were compiled at Moorfields, which showed that patients had often been free of all symptoms during long periods of years and had been able to continue at work with no apparent visual disability in the interval. From the onset of the delayed keratitis, their sight rapidly deteriorated.

The outbreak of war in 1939 and the fact that improved methods of examination had become possible since the war of 1914-18 made the question a vital one, and Dr. Mann and Dr. Pullinger therefore undertook the inquiry, the results of which are described in the article under review. They began by carrying out experiments on rabbits at the Imperial Cancer Research Fund Laboratory and then correlated the results of these experiments with recent and late accident and war cases.

The conclusions reached as a result of their research were threefold:—

1. That the clinical pathology of the lesion involving the limbus is similar in man and rabbit.
2. That the reaction in man and rabbit depends on the size of the dose and the anatomical situation.

3. That the late keratitis in man is seen as a degenerative ulceration depending on the initial damage sustained by the limbus and cornea and not on any continued action of mustard gas or any of its breakdown products. Thus in the present state of our knowledge prophylaxis is likely to be more important than treatment.

A Statistical Analysis of 3,219 Persons certified Blind at the Regional Clinic, Glasgow, during the period 1929-1935.

Three articles bearing the above title appeared in the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* in August, September and October of last year, and their authors. Dr. John Marshall and Dr. H. E. Seiler, have recently reprinted them in pamphlet form. The worker concerned with prevention of blindness in this country is almost immediately brought up against the scarcity of material dealing with causation, and the pamphlet is specially welcome on this account.

During the period under review, the two ophthalmologists with their colleagues, examined 5,140 persons, of whom 3,219 were certified as blind within the meaning of the Blind Persons Act. They came from Glasgow and seven adjoining counties and large burghs, and 23 local authorities were served. The visual acuity of those certified, who were of all ages, was under 3/60 Snellen in more than 90 per cent. of the cases, and in the remaining cases the field of vision was seriously contracted. In more than half the cases blindness occurred after the age of 50, while in nearly two-thirds the condition causing blindness had begun prior to that age. The first year of life showed the highest rate for the onset of blindness, and the last years (from 70 upwards) the next greatest. Males were in excess of females.

The chief causes of blindness (jointly responsible for over 80 per cent. of the cases) were as follows:—

	Per cent.
Cataract	16.77
Myopia	16.34
Venereal disease	13.95
Chronic septicæmia auto-intoxication, etc.	10.72
Glaucoma	8.69
Congenital anomalies and abiotrophies	7.45
Injury	6.42

In the cases becoming blind in early childhood, ophthalmia neonatorum and congenital anomalies caused blindness in 68 per cent. It is satisfactory to know that the incidence of

congenital syphilis under one year in Glasgow has fallen from 335 cases in 1922 to 36 cases in 1937, and the incidence of visual impairment of gonorrheal ophthalmia neonatorum has fallen from 112 in the period 1917-21 to 2 in the period 1932-36. Evidently the work of those responsible for maternity and child welfare has borne fruit.

In the age group 16-29 syphilis was the most important single cause, and it also took first place in the age-group 30-49, being responsible for 20 per cent. of the cases in that group, with myopia following close behind and being responsible for nearly 18 per cent. In the 50-69 age-group, myopia, cataract, glaucoma and vascular disease are the most important causes, and in the 70 plus group 67 per cent. of the cases are attributable to cataract or glaucoma. An analysis of cases due to senile cataract showed that in nearly 57 per cent. there was possibility of restored vision by operation.

Miners and quarry workers showed a high degree of incidence (39 per 10,000 of the population gainfully employed as compared with 15 per 10,000 for all cases). Much of the blindness among such workers was caused by explosions, falls or blows, and would not be materially reduced by protective devices. Lower than average rates were found among agriculturists, professional, commercial and personal service occupations.

Of those certified nearly 11 per cent. were of Irish origin, and these showed "significantly higher rates" for all causes of blindness except congenital syphilis; the higher rates are attributed to the fact that the Irish-born population showed a higher proportion of males and of persons over 50 than the native-born.

In only one condition, viz. diabetes as a cause of blindness, was there a marked excess of females.

Family history afforded little data of value, but this was considered as due to the unreliable information which was all that could be secured.

A comparison between the present analysis and that of a similar survey in England and Wales showed that the only important difference is an excess in the Scottish sample of incidence due to chronic septicæmia, focal sepsis or auto-intoxication.

Perhaps the most disquieting statement in the Report is that only 14 per cent. of those persons who underwent treatment as recommended at the Regional Clinic stayed the course. The fact that so many of the curable blind failed to undergo treatment inclines the writers to consider that the blind pension should only be granted to those whose blindness will not

respond to treatment. They consider that economic reasons are partly responsible for this failure to persevere, but no doubt the dread of pain has a good deal to do with it, and the very natural fear of the patient that he may as a result of operation lose the little sight that still remains to him. Patient and sympathetic follow-up of these cases by home visiting would perhaps do something to prevent the deplorable waste of medical skill and the years of preventable blindness which the lapsed cases must involve.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blinded Actor's Triumph.—One of the principal parts in the new film, "The Silver Fleet" (that of a villainous Gestapo chief), is played by Mr. Esmond Knight. Blinded in the attack on the *Bismarck*, Mr. Knight is the first sightless actor, on either stage or screen, to have played the part of a sighted person. It is a truly wonderful performance.

"The Silver Fleet" is a British tribute to the silent struggle of the Dutch against their Nazi oppressors, with Mr. Ralph Richardson in the leading part as a patriotic shipowner.

"Jewish Braille Review": Literary Competition Prizewinners.—Mr. Richard J. Vine, of West Ealing, has won the first prize in the poetry section of a literary competition organised by the *Jewish Braille Review*. The poem, entitled "The Middle Watch," won for its author the further award of the Helen Keller Medal for literary excellence.

Mr. Vine lost his eyesight in the last war. He was trained at St. Dunstan's and is now a telephone operator.

Other British prizewinners include Mr. C. Hutchinson (Sussex) and Miss I. Watkins (Swansea), who win the 2nd and 3rd prizes respectively for short story entries. Honourable mention for poetry is gained by Miss J. Hardwick (Northants), and in the short story section by Mr. R. Best (Leeds) and Mr. J. Schujman (Glasgow).

A Great Knitter.—Mrs. Munro, of Elgin, who is blind, has now knitted a total of 1,000 comforts for the Forces in this and the last war; her main concern is for the men of the Seaforth Highlanders, and judging from the letters she receives she has become as popular with them as she was with their fathers in the last war.

When the wool given out becomes scarce Mrs. Munro purchases more for herself, and as a special gesture in warship week, she bought extra and made three beautiful bed-jackets for the wounded. She has received many letters of appreciation from the Red Cross.

Royal Normal College Successes. The following results are announced:—

OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE JOINT BOARD
SCHOOL CERTIFICATE.

Bertram Downer	..	"Very good" in 2 subjects, "Credit" in 5.
Stanley Palmer	..	"Very good" in 1 subject, "Credit" in 5.
Alan Porter	..	"Very good" in 3 subjects, "Credit" in 3.
Leslie Pye	..	"Very good" in 4 subjects, "Credit" in 3.
Michael Reordan	..	"Very good" in 3 subjects, "Credit" in 4.

All the above pupils are Gardner Scholars.

Blind Woman Graduate.—Cambridge University has awarded the degree of M.A. to Miss Ruth Mary Hitchcock, the Ipswich blind student who took an Honours degree at Newnham in June, 1938.

A Record Tomato Crop.—Last year, one member of a Garden Club for the Blind grew 150 lbs. of tomatoes from a 2d. packet of seed.

Blind Man Gives Instruction in Radio Repairs.—Byron H. Webb, who is 23, and blind, has just started to teach men of the U.S. Signal Corps to repair radio sets in the dark.

A degree in physical science has been awarded to Webb, who does his instructing in a blacked-out laboratory.

He has studied radio for several years, and has developed such sensitive touch and hearing that he can find faults either by feeling or the use of headphones.

He can find breaks in a coil of wire by the sounds he hears, and check troubles in wiring with his fingers. Army authorities saw the usefulness of this in the training of signallers to make emergency repairs in darkness.

A Blind Jockey and a Blind Trainer.—"There was a big bet made the other day in a club that a blind jockey had never ridden in a race and that a blind trainer had never prepared winners. I have been appealed to as adjudicator," writes J. Fairfax-Blakeborough in the *Darlington and Stockton Times*.

"There is one recorded instance of a totally blind professional jockey continuing to ride in public after he had lost his sight. He was William McCilvray. His father had the Black-shiels Inn at Fala, near Edinburgh, and, after he had lost his sight, Willie rode only on the Scottish courses, with which he was familiar.

"The only blind trainer of whom I have any record is Edgar Cox, with whom the Yorkshire jockey, E. Crossley, was first associated when he went to the West Indies from Ayr. Cox once told me that he could distinguish each horse he had in training by the sound of its hooves, and by the same means knew whether these animals were improving in condition, weight and speed."

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home.

Halifax Society for the Blind.—In a postscript to its last Annual Report, the Society recorded the outbreak of a disastrous fire, and the fear that permission to rebuild would not be granted in the present difficult times. It is therefore with justifiable pride that the present Report records that not only was a rebuilding licence secured, but work was begun almost at once, and by the end of three months one floor had been completed. A tribute is paid to the workmen who carried on in spite of very bad weather conditions, thus making it possible for many of the blind employees to be taken back into work much earlier than was expected. Sales for the year amounted to £8,000, which, though £2,500 less than in the previous year, exceeded the sales for 1939-40 by approximately £1,000. The record is one which is a credit to all concerned, including the officials and employees "who were called upon to attempt the almost impossible job of carrying on 'under abnormal conditions.'"

Empire.

Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Western Division.—The Western Division cares for the blind in British Columbia and Alberta and works under the National Director, Captain Robinson, to whose work a tribute is paid. In his account of the year's work, Captain Robinson draws attention not only to the success of the Institute but also to ways in which there is room for advance. Stress is laid on the importance of the home-teaching service, and to the fact that five home-teaching candidates have been given special tuition during the year. Two interesting instances are given of the work of blindness-prevention in Northern Alberta. The report is well-illustrated and a particularly effective photograph of a blind man's hands on a Braille book is given on the cover.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances :		s.	d.
19005	Charles, H., and Miller, S. Where the waters are Blue, <i>Song-Waltz</i> ..	0	6
19006	Monaco, J. Ev'ry Night about this Time, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i> ..	0	6
19007	Stone, J. Idaho, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i> ..	0	6
19008	Wrubel, A. I met her on Monday, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i> ..	0	6

Notice on Braille Music.

Apart from the publication of a limited quantity of Dance Music for the benefit of blind musicians who need to be up to date in these matters, the National Institute for the Blind has postponed publication of new music in order to economise paper and metal. There is in stock, however, a very large quantity of music printed before the War. On the advice of the Board of Education's Inspector of Music, the National Institute has now decided to print and publish certain Church Services for the benefit of blind Church Organists and some Madrigals.

The Services shortly to be produced are :—

		s.	d.
18998	Boyce. Te Deum in C, S.S. ..	1	0
18997	Gray, Alan. Te Deum in G, V.S. ..	1	0
18991	Ley, H. G. Communion Service in F minor, V.S. ..	0	6
18992	Noble, Tertius. Evening Service in B minor, V.S. ..	1	0

The Madrigals are :—

1900	Edwards, Richard. In going to my naked bed (Four-Part), O. and V.S. ..	1	0
18999	Gibbons, Orlando. The Silver Swan (Five-Part), O and S.S. ..	1	0

As no new Church or Choral music has been published for some two years, the demand for these new publications may be heavy, and as it is desired to avoid any waste of paper, intending purchasers are requested to order in advance of publication. All orders at the National Institute by April 17th will be met; no guarantee of supply can be given of orders received after that date.

BRAILLE BOOKS.

Forthcoming Pandas.

No. 62. A Man Lay Dead, by Ngaio Marsh. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

Excellent written, this story of detection begins with a "game" of murder at a country house which ends in real murder. The characterisation is good, and there are some thrilling scenes in Soho.

No. 63. Courtier to Death, by Anthony Gilbert. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

London and Paris are the scenes of this exciting story of detection, in which a young barrister, a Scotland Yard man and a French detective join in investigating the murder of a once celebrated film star sunk to the demi-monde of drug addicts. Clever character drawing and a keen sense of atmosphere.

MOON BOOKS.

4639-4644 The Captain from Connecticut, by C. S. Forester. 6 vols. (Limited Edition.)

APPARATUS.

Reduction in the Cost of Apparatus and Appliances.

In the interests of blind purchasers who are resident in the British Empire the National Institute for the Blind has decided to incur a larger loss on its sales of apparatus and appliances. A new price-list, embodying the changes to be made, has been published, and regular customers, or those thinking of making purchases are invited to write to the Institute for this list, which will be sent post free on application. The Institute will continue to supply apparatus post-free to customers resident in Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The price of manilla paper, qualities 1 and 2 will remain unchanged, but quality 4 will be reduced from 6d. to 4d. per pound post free. Braille shorthand rolls will be reduced from 9d. to 6d.

Free Gifts of Apparatus.

The National Institute for the Blind has decided to make a free gift of any piece of apparatus listed by the Institute and unobtainable in the open market to any blind person resident in the British Empire requiring such apparatus, *at the outset of his or her career in order to earn a livelihood*, on condition that the apparatus is not such as normally would be supplied by, or with the help of, the employer. The Institute will also be glad to consider applications from blind persons in employment who are not able to meet the list price of any tool required in their trade. Applications for free gifts must be made on an application form obtainable from the Institute. In view of the present difficulties of supply, it must be understood that all orders and all requests for free gifts are accepted subject to the apparatus in question being available.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

	Vols.
Theology :	
Clarke, W. K. Lowther. Liturgy and Worship : Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion ..	18
Ingram, Kenneth. The Night is far spent ..	2
Rawlinson, A. E. H. St. Mark, with Introduction, Commentary and Notes ..	7
Robertson, Archibald. The Bible and its Background ..	4
Social and Political :	
Catlin, George. One Anglo-American Nation ..	2
Johnson, Hewlitt, Dean of Canterbury. The Socialist sixth of the World ..	5
Mumford, Lewis. Faith for Living ..	3
Spring Rice, Margery. Working-class Wives, their Health and Conditions ..	3
English Literature :	
Gill, Eric. Last Essays ..	1
Lewis, C. Day, and Strong, L. A. G. (eds.) New Anthology of Modern Verse, 1920-1940 ..	3
Nicholson, Norman (ed.). Anthology of Religious Verse designed for the times ..	1
Biography :	
Hahn, Emily. The Soong Sisters ..	5
History :	
Namier, L. B. Conflicts : Studies in Contemporary History ..	3
Stirk, S. D. The Prussian Spirit : Survey of German Literature and Politics, 1914-1940 ..	4

**NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND,
35, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1.**

ADDITIONS.

Fiction :	<i>Vols.</i>
Baum, Vicki. Central Stores	3
Beeding, Francis. Eleven were Brave	4
Blake, George. Valiant Heart	7
Bloom, Ursula. Flying Swans	4
Brophy, John. Immortal Sergeant	4
Broster, D. K. Sea without a Haven	5
Buck, Pearl S. Other Gods. An American Legend	6
Cannan, Joanna. High Table	3
Cather, Willa. Sapphira and the Slave Girl ..	3
Cobb, Belton. Home Guard Mystery	3
Connington, J. J. Dangerfield Talisman ..	3
Creasey, John. Toff is Back	3
Crompton, Richmal. Steffan Green	4
Delafield, E. M. No One now will Know ..	5
Dix, Maurice B. This is my Murder	4
Fedorova, Nina. The Family	5
Gallico, Paul. The Snow Goose. A Legend of Dunkirk	1
Gibbons, Stella. The Rich House	6
Godden, Rumer. Gypsy Gypsy	3
Greenwood, Robert. Mr. Bunting at War ..	4
Halward, Leslie. To Tea on Sunday. Stories and Episode	2
Hine, Muriel. Man of the House	5
Horler, Sydney. Enter the Ace	3
Houghton, Claude. Passing of the Third Floor Back. A Novel	3
Jameson, Storm. The Fort	2
John, Evan. King's Masque	8
Lane, Margaret. Walk into my Parlour ..	7
Leslie, Doris. Full Flavour	7
Mason, A. E. W. Musk and Amber	4
Muskett, Netta. Scarlet Heels	5
Newman, Bernard. Siegfried Spy	4
Norris, Kathleen. The Venables	7
Peck, Winifred. Garden Enclosed	5
Peck, Winifred. Let Me go Back	4
Punshon, E. R. Death among the Sunbathers ..	4
Rame, David. Sun shall greet Them	5
Raymond, Ernest. Song of the Tide	7
Remarque, Erich M. Flotsam	6
Richmond, Grace S. Strawberry Acres	4
Roberts, D. Dew. Still glides the Stream ..	5
Robins, Denise. Sweet Sorrow	3
Sandys, Oliver. What-a-Girl	3
Selected Austrian Short Stories (Translator M. Busch)	4
Shute, Nevil. Pied Piper	4
Simenon, Georges. Inspector Maigret Investigates	5
Stacpoole, H. de Vere. An American at Oxford ..	4
Thirkell, Angela. Northbridge Rectory	5
Thompson, Sylvia. Gulls Fly Inland	3
Vachell, H. A. Black Squire	6
Wells, H. G. Babes in the Darkling Wood ..	6
Wells, H. G. You can't be too Careful. A sample of life 1901-1951	5
Williams, Rebecca Y. Father was a Handful ..	3

Miscellaneous :

Abraham, J. Johnston. Ninety-nine Wimpole Street	2
Angell, Norman. Why Freedom Matters	3
Barne, Kitty. Listening to the Orchestra	3
Benchley, Belle J. My Life in a Man-made Jungle	5

	<i>Vols.</i>
Beveridge, Sir William. Social Insurance and Allied Services. (Parts I and VI and paragraphs from Part II dealing with Blind Persons)	1
Bigland, Eileen. Key to the Russian Door ..	3
"Blake." Readiness at Dawn	3
Bloom, Ursula. Time, Tide and I	3
Boreham, F. W. I Forgot to Say	4
Churchill, Rt. Hon. Winston. Unrelenting Struggle. War Speeches, compiled by Charles Eade	7
E. W. Austin Memorial	
Coole, W. W., and M. F. Potter (Editors). Thus Spake Germany	9
Coward, Noel. Blithe Spirit. A Play	2
Destruction of an Army. First Campaign in Libya	2
Dickens, Monica. One Pair of Feet	4
Front Line, 1940-1941. The official story of the Civil Defence of Britain.	3
Gallagher, O. D. Retreat in the East	4
Hardwick, J. C. Conquest of Disability	1
Harding, D. W. Impulse to Dominate	4
Harte, Geoffrey and Kit. Island in the Sun ..	5
Hastings, Macdonald. Passed as Censored ..	3
Hurd, Sir Archibald. Who Goes There ?	4
Jones, J. D. Three Score Years and Ten	5
Laskier, Frank. My Name is Frank	1
Lewis, C. S. Screwtape Letters	2
Linklater, Eric. Highland Division	2
Low, Professor A. M. How We Find Out	3
Lowndes, Mrs. Belloc. "I, too have lived in Arcadia"	5
Mathews, Basil. A Little Life of Jesus	3
Maynard, Sir John. Russia in Flux	6
Nevins, Allan. The United States	3
Oxford Pamphlets on World Affairs :	
Clark, G. N. Holland and the War	1
Hudson, G. F. Turkey, Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean	1
Roxby, P. M. China	1
Poncins, Gontran de. Kabloona	5
Rowan-Robinson, Major-Gen. Wavell in the Middle East	4
Roche, Rev. A. Religion and Life (R.C.)	2
Sayers, Berwick. Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. His Life and Letters	6
Snowden, Rita F. When We Two Walked	4
Shaw, G. B. Mrs. Warren's Profession. A Play ..	2
Thorold, Rev. Anthony. Conversation with God (R.C.)	1
Various Authors. Festival Sermons: Addresses for Great Occasions of the Christian Year. (C. Alington, H. E. Brierley, L. D. Weatherhead and others)	2
Villiers, Alan. By Way of Cape Horn	4
Williams, Leigh. Green Prison	4

Juvenile :

Brent-Dyer, E. M. Jo returns to the Chalet School	4
Crompton, Richmal. William the Dictator ..	3
Doorly, Eleanor. Microbe Man	2
Evans, G. Bramwell. Out with Romany by the Sea	2
Mowbray, John. The Megève Mystery	3
Oliver, Marjorie Mary, and Eva Ducat. Ponies and Caravans. Sequel to Ponies of Bunts ..	3
Sankey, Marjorie. Stay for the Winter	3
Trease, G. Running Deer	3

	Vols.
Watney, M. Stories about the Earthly Life of the Lord Jesus	1
Grade I:	
Brand, Max. Poker-Face	5
Wallace, Edgar. Thief in the Night	2

VACANCIES IN HOMES, ETC.
28th February, 1943.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Northampton Bloomfield, Leamington	—
Wavertree House, Hove	—
The Haven, Scarborough	—
Fair Lawn, Totteridge (for convalescence or short periods of rest)	10
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea	—
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring	3
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay	2
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth	2

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

HOME TEACHER (SIGHTED) REQUIRED for a town area. Applications, stating age, experience (if any), with testimonials and any other particulars, should be sent to the South Beds. Society for the Welfare of the Blind, Williamson Street, Luton, Beds.

HOME TEACHERS' EXAMINATION, 1943.

Those anxious to qualify for the College of Teachers' Certificate are invited to apply for details of a Postal Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham R.I. for the Blind, Harborne, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

PRESTON HOMES FOR THE BLIND require resident **KINDERGARTEN MISTRESS**, Certificated or Uncertificated, Burnham Scale III, and bonus with Special Schools increment. Apply—Superintendent and Secretary, Lytham Road, Fulwood, Preston, with copies of testimonials.

SIGHTED FEMALE HOME TEACHER

for Birmingham area. State age and experience. Diploma not essential. Three recent testimonials required. Commencing salary £3 weekly plus 12s. cost of living bonus. Apply Secretary, Royal Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17.

ROYAL MIDLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

Appointment of Home Teacher.

Applications are invited from certificated sighted Home Teachers for an appointment in the County of Nottingham. Commencing salary £169 per annum plus appropriate war bonus. Applications, stating age, qualifications, experience, and enclosing copies of testimonials, should be sent to the undersigned on or before 30th March.

A. C. V. THOMAS,
Superintendent and Secretary.
30, Chaucer Street, Nottingham.

THE EAST SUSSEX ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND requires immediately a sighted (woman) **Home Teacher** for rural area away from coast. Applicants should possess Home Teachers' Certificate of College of Teachers of the Blind and must provide own car, the running expenses of which are refunded. Commencing salary (certificated) £175 (plus War Bonus of 7½ per cent.), rising to £200. Superannuation Scheme in force. Apply in own handwriting, with details of age and experience and copies of two recent testimonials to Organising Secretary, E.S.A.B., 165, High Street, Lewes—marking envelope "Home Teacher."

CITY OF SHEFFIELD.

Applications are invited for the post of Home Teacher in the Welfare of the Blind Department of the Corporation. Candidates must hold the Home Teachers' Certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind, or take it within two years of appointment. Salary, if certificated, £160—£220—£10 plus cost of living increase (at present £26) and uniform (or allowance in lieu of this); if uncertificated, according to experience and qualifications. The post is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, and the successful candidate will be required to undergo a medical examination.

Applications, with copies of three recent testimonials, to be sent to the Town Clerk, Welfare of the Blind Department, 284, Sharrow Lane, Sheffield, 11.

THE WIGAN, LEIGH AND DISTRICT WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND.

General Superintendent and Secretary Wanted by the Wigan, Leigh and District Workshops for the Blind. Salary £350 per annum rising by two annual increments of £25 to £400 per annum, plus War Bonus. Applicants must have had previous practical experience of the work, be of good education and be "sighted." Full particulars of (1) the terms of the appointment, (2) the duties to be performed, and (3) blank forms of application, may be obtained from the undersigned, to whom applications (accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials) must be delivered not later than Monday, 22nd March, 1943.

WILLIAM HENRY TYHER,
Town Clerk.

Town Clerk's Office,
Municipal Buildings,
Library Street, Wigan.
1st March, 1943.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF OLDHAM.

BLIND PERSONS ACT (1920) COMMITTEE.

Applications are invited for appointment as Home Teacher of the Blind. Applicants must have passed the Home Teachers' Examination. Salary £166 per annum, plus cost of living bonus, at present 13s. per week for men and 10s. per week for women.

The appointment is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, and the successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination and to reside within the County Borough.

Canvassing or submitting testimonials from any member of the Council or of any Committee appointed by the Council will be a disqualification.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials, to be forwarded to the undersigned immediately.

MAURICE HARRISON,
Director of Education.

Education Offices, Oldham.
9th March, 1943.

The New **BEACON**

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 316.

APRIL 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

EMPLOYMENT OF BLIND IN SIGHTED INDUSTRY

By H. S. EDKINS

General Superintendent and Secretary, The Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind

TWELVE months have elapsed since the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind began placing its blind people in sighted industry, mainly as a remedy for unemployment due to shortage of material at the Workshops.

In March, 1942, there were 1,672 blind people on our register, aged sixteen and over, including all in Birmingham, Smethwick, and West Bromwich, and the Home Workers in seven counties who benefit under our Scheme.

Many blind people found work for themselves, mostly labouring jobs in various industries, but our chief aim has been to place people in groups at various factories. In attaining this object, we have been greatly helped at all times by Officers at many branches at the Ministry of Labour, whose efforts on behalf of the blind are untiring; also Officers of the Ministry of Aircraft Production, and County Secretaries of Local Associations for the Blind. All this ready and sustained co-operation is acknowledged with gratitude.

The number of blind now in sighted industry on our register is 154, 115 of these being men and 39 women, and of these 15 were so engaged before the war. Of those who have found work for themselves only 9 are totally blind, while of those placed by us the number is 31. The number of those finding work themselves and returning to us is 5—all men—and 2 women placed by us are back again.

The men have been more ready than the women to go into other industries, and many more women could have been placed.

One of the disadvantages which the blind find in other factories is that they cannot move about the place as freely as they can in our Workshops, and with the noise of machinery it is more difficult to make contact with each other, and a blind worker may feel quite alone in a very strange world. At the various factories everything possible is done for the general wellbeing of our people by Labour Managers, Welfare Officers, Foremen, and the general body of workers. The hours of work are usually much longer than those worked in our Workshops, but the weekly income is very much higher. The concerts and dancing in which blind workers can take part in the canteens are very much

appreciated. They make many new friends among their sighted colleagues.

Travelling is not as difficult as one might expect, as the special buses which take the workers to and from the factories usually pass some convenient point for our blind people.

In addition to placing our blind workers in other factories we have brought some of the work into our own factory, and we have a mechanical department giving full employment to eleven men and four women. Power machines of a simple and safe character have been installed for drilling and punching, together with hand-operated mechanical devices to assist in assembly and other work. There is at present a good variety of this work available and most of it is easily mastered by our workers. The department was opened nearly a year ago, and some of the contracts originally taken on are still running.

From this experience, and in considering blind employment prospects after the war, the following questions, among others, arise:—

1. What will be the effect on blind employment of the Beveridge and Tomlinson Reports?

2. What proportion of our blind people, if any, will remain in sighted industry after the war, when juvenile and female labour at cheap rates may again be available?

3. Will legislation compel industry to take a percentage of disabled persons, including blind, even though they may not be an economic proposition?

4. To what extent can we increase the number of occupations practised in Blind Workshops? Present experience suggests that simple mechanical assembly and inspection work might be included, if not with much profit after the war, at least with no greater loss than is incurred in the usual handicrafts in normal times.

5. Can we pay better wages? It takes several years to train blind persons in the usual handicrafts: it takes only a few hours to learn most of the simple assembly and inspection work. The rates of pay are in inverse proportion to the effort and skill required of the worker. If and when our workers return to us they will be depressed and handicapped by the lower rates of pay: they will feel, as I feel, that the trade rates of wages for our skilled craftsmen and women are too low.

HOME NEWS

Pembrokeshire Blind Society.—The new address of the secretary of this Society is 7, Percy Terrace, Barn Street, Haverfordwest. The provisions of the Blind Persons Act are carried out by the Pembrokeshire County Council, County Health Dept., Haverfordwest.

Gardner's Trust for the Blind.—As from April 1st, 1943, the permanent address of the office of Gardner's Trust for the Blind will be 53, Victoria Street, Westminster, S.W.1.

Blind Schoolboys' "Wings for Victory" Effort.—Hardwick Hall School for Blind Boys (Henshaw's Institution) took its full share in the Ellesmere "Wings for Victory" week effort.

The school has a savings group of about forty members, and its average weekly takings are approximately £2 10s. For the "Wings for Victory" week the group elected a special committee of six boys. This committee decided to provide the ten dinghies required for the ten Spitfires represented by Ellesmere's target of £50,000, and the group target was accordingly fixed at £80.

Throughout the week competitions and tournaments were carried through, and, apart from bringing in money these gave many pupils the

opportunity to display their skill at draughts, dominoes and other indoor games. A whist drive, two concerts and an auction sale were held, and on each day of the week a gramophone recital was given.

One wall of the Assembly Hall was covered with suitable posters, and over all hung ten Spitfires, each waiting for its dinghy. Every morning, in Assembly, the total for the previous day was announced, and for every eight pounds in this total one dinghy was hung in place.

By Wednesday evening the target of £80 was passed, but the efforts continued. Thursday saw the one hundred pounds reached and the end of the week saw a grand total of £132 15s. "A Dinghy for Every Spitfire" had been achieved and a special place had to be provided for six extra dinghies.

Considering the number of pupils in the school, this was a very creditable effort.

Midwifery and Prevention.—The importance of a good midwifery service in preventing blindness was stressed by Dr. T. Carnwath when he spoke at the annual meeting of the Blind Welfare Association, Northern Ireland, in the Carlton, Belfast.

Dr. Carnwath said that recent inquiries had revealed that virtually half of the blindness in infancy was due to inflammation of the eyes of the newly-born. Experience showed that a good midwifery service could prevent blindness of this type, and he hoped that aspect would not be forgotten when the reorganisation of Ulster's medical services was considered by the Government.

Dr. Carnwath suggested that provision should also be made to have the services of a specialist available throughout the Province. There was a close inter-dependence between the various social services and they should see that the fact was realised.

Lady Louis and "Pinny."—Last month Lady Louis Mountbatten paid a visit to the new Sunshine Home for Blind Babies at Kings-thorpe, Northampton. She was accompanied by Dr. Eric Shaw, County Commissioner and St. John Ambulance Brigade, and Mrs. Jennings, Lady County Superintendent. Particularly friendly was little "Pinny," so called because when he arrived at the Home some months ago he was like Pinnochio!

He was very polite and gave Lady Louis a beautiful bow when he presented her with a posy from the garden. Kitchen, playroom, dining-room, surgery, bedrooms, were all inspected under the guidance of the Matron, Miss Riley.

The Comedy of a Blind Beggar.—Londoners have lately had an opportunity of seeing Synge's comedy "The Well of the Saints" at

the Arts Theatre, where Irish players delight the ear with their soft Celtic voices and snatches of Celtic poetry. Martin and Mary Doul, a blind beggar and his wife in rags so realistic that they might have been brought straight from a Dublin slum, regain their sight at the hands of a holy man as they sit at the cross-roads. Mary, drab, ill-favoured, with mousey hair falling about her sallow face, has always boasted to Martin of her beauty, and he, poor fellow, knowing no better, has taken her at her word. When he sees her for the first time the shock is severe, but Martin's newly-opened eyes are roving ones, and he soon lets them fall on lovely Molly Byrne, betrothed to Timmy the smith, and the trouble begins. Brawny Timmy finds work for Martin at his forge, and Martin is "destroyed entirely" by work that demands so much more energy than the gentle plaiting of rushes (a pastime occupation if ever there was one, done as Martin does it at the crossroads). Both he and Mary soon find that the new gift of sight has its drawbacks, and neither is wholly regretful when the darkness falls upon them again. The holy man, who still has some holy water left, offers to try to repeat the miracle, but Mary and Martin spurn the suggestion, and the curtain falls as they grope their way along the pathway to the green hills, content to know the beauty of the world through sound and touch and scent once more. Martin, played by Mr. W. G. Fay, is a naughty old rascal, workshy, plausible and smooth tongued, but altogether attractive.

EMPIRE NEWS

The Blind of India.—Major Sir Clutha Mackenzie, who is organiser for St. Dunstan's for blinded Indian soldiers, has been asked by the Government of India to prepare post-war plans for welfare work among the civilian blind. That the Government has taken this action is a welcome sign that official interest is being taken in a problem that has for many years given great concern to workers for the blind in this country. In 1930 the National Institute for the Blind secured the help of a group of persons with long first-hand experience of conditions in India, to examine the problem, and, in the following year, this group, which met under the inspiring chairmanship of the late Sir Michael O'Dwyer, presented a Memorial to the Government of India, concentrating especially upon the facts of preventable blindness. Later, a letter was written to the Secretary of State expressing the hope that an Advisory Committee might be set

up in India, consisting of persons actively engaged in blind welfare. It was with great regret that the National Institute learned from the Secretary of State that "financial stringency" prevented action being taken. Government action alone could cope effectively with so vast a problem, but as this was refused the National Institute decided in 1932 that its best hope lay in co-operating with the Indian Red Cross, and made a grant of £570 to pay for the systematic instruction of teachers in blindness prevention and to cover the cost of providing simple pamphlets on prevention in various vernaculars. Since then a number of grants for a similar purpose have been made by the Institute, and many reports have been received on the expenditure of the money. Another problem which has specially concerned the Institute has been that of literature for India, and news that a special Government Committee had been set up to consider

the possibility of a uniform Braille code was recently received with great satisfaction. The National Institute is therefore extremely glad to know of the work that is being undertaken by Sir Clutha Mackenzie, and looks forward to co-operating with him in his great task as opportunities arise.

Children's Danger from Explosives.—So pre-

valent have accidents with stray dynamite detonators become among South African children, that thousands of dummy detonators have been prepared for demonstration purposes at schools. This is the result of a campaign organised by the South African Council for the Blind to prevent citizens losing their sight through the inexperienced handling of explosives.

FOREIGN NEWS

The "Outlook for the Blind."—"The *Outlook for the Blind* and the *Teachers' Forum*, the two American magazines devoted to Blind Welfare, were merged a year ago and from the beginning of the present year a new development has taken place in that it has been decided to issue the joint magazine ten times a year, instead of only five times. It will not be so large as hitherto, but will be more up-to-date, and the new arrangement by which teachers of blind children and workers in the general field of blind welfare will no longer have their respective articles segregated should promote that "better under-

standing between all of our professional workers and a broadening of the interests of individual readers" for which the Editor expresses a hope in the January issue.

"The Braille Musician."—Mr. Leopold Dubov, of New York, informs us by cable that he is holding copies of *The Braille Musician*, a new bi-monthly, printed in Grade 2 and published by the Jewish Braille Review, for British and British Empire readers who apply for free copies. Applications should be sent to the Music Editor, P.O. Box 36, Morris Heights Station, New York, U.S.A.

RECENT STATISTICS—I

By BEN PURSE

MANY of us have been anxiously waiting for the publication of recent statistics having reference to the distribution of the blind population of England and Wales. These figures are now available, and although they do not contain any startling disclosures, they are of considerable interest to students of social problems. It is not intended in this article to examine the implications in detail of each set of figures, but merely to draw attention to any outstanding facts that are deemed to be of sufficient interest to agencies for the blind and which appear to call for such action as may be practicable and possible. Those who are responsible for collecting the data must have had considerable difficulty in compiling their figures since 1939, because of the policy of evacuation which has differed so fundamentally from one locality to another, and we think the regional bodies are to be congratulated on the work they have accomplished under very trying circumstances. When better days return, they will be in a position more closely to co-ordinate the facts and give us of their best. In the meantime critics of the

central register would be well advised to ask themselves whether they could have done anything like so well, having in mind the serious obstacles with which the regional bodies have been confronted. We fervently hope that the future may secure to us arrangements such as formerly existed under the aegis of the Union of Counties Associations for the Blind in the matter of the preparation and presentation of statistical matter, for there was nothing fundamental, nothing really vital in the old arrangements which was omitted. One simple example will suffice for our present purposes. We could always turn with satisfaction to the scales of domiciliary assistance covering the whole of England and Wales, knowing that they gave the latest available official information, and this was an important fact for which we were profoundly grateful.

The returns just issued by the Ministry of Health are incomplete and therefore most unsatisfactory. Perhaps it could not be otherwise under present circumstances, and we must be very thankful even for the half-loaf which is decidedly better than continuous starvation. Professor Bowley in his admirable book "*A Manual of Elementary Statistics*," over and over again emphasises the importance of not attempt-

ing to draw final conclusions from incomplete data, and the social investigator, if he knows his job, must always be very mindful of this pitfall. Having this consideration in mind, it is unwise to enter upon a detailed criticism of a collection of facts, no matter how attractive the temptation to do so may be.

The figures for 1940-41 show that the blind population on the central register was 74,324. The comparable figure for 1941-42 was reported to be 75,306. This does not necessarily mean that the blind population has increased by 982 persons, for the reason to which we have referred above, although the age incidence of blindness may have contributed substantially to this addition. The number of infants from 0-1 year in 1940 was 9; in 1941, 11, and in 1942, 9. The foregoing are interesting figures, but in the absence of other and additional information it would be hazardous to try to draw any firm conclusions. In the year 1940 the number of children aged 5-16 was stated to be 1,499; in 1941 the number was 1,425; and in 1942 the comparable figure was 1,369. If the foregoing figures with regard to this age period reveal the true state of things, there is surely good reason for thinking that the attitude of those persons who are concerned with the planning of our schools for the blind is abundantly justified. The rapid diminution of numbers in this age period, whilst in itself being satisfactory, suggests that the educationalist must do some serious thinking in the immediate future about the character and location of our residential schools. There is one grave aspect of the situation to which we must call attention, however unwilling we may be to deal with controversial matter in an article of this kind. The returns show that the number of blind children otherwise described as normal and apparently not at school, is given as 112 in the year 1941, but the most alarming feature of the situation is that the statistics show that the number of such children in 1942 was 157, 52 of whom apparently could not be traced. In the old days there used to be an important paragraph in the Report of the Board of Education specifically calling the attention of agencies for the blind to this type of case and requesting these authorities to report any such cases with which they might from time to time come into contact. At a favourable opportunity both the local societies and the regional bodies may find it convenient to give some attention to this matter, with a view to ascertaining the reasons for the absence from school of such a large number of these children.

In the year 1940 the number of young people from 16-21 years of age was given as 1,327; in 1941, 1,227; and in 1942, 1,124. Whatever the causes for these diminutions may be, and there are probably several, restraint must be exercised in attempting to reach conclusions that at present would be based on insufficient information. The fact that a number of these people automatically are transferred from one age group to another does not explain everything, and therefore further comment must be reserved.

The next age period, from 21-40, discloses interesting figures. In 1940 the number was 7,964; in 1941, 7,920; and in 1942, 7,728. The age period 40-50 shows that in 1940 there were 7,589; in 1941, 7,491; and in 1942, 7,393. The age group 50-65 in the year 1940 showed 19,020; in 1941, 18,954; and in 1942, 18,493. In the year 1940 blind persons from 65-70 years of age numbered 9,860; in 1941, 9,716; and in 1942, 9,784. Persons over 70 in 1940 numbered 26,811; in 1941, 27,250; and in 1942, 29,053. Thus it will be seen that the largest age group consists of persons of 70 years of age and upwards, and this is a fact that might reasonably be anticipated.

It will be interesting for a moment to glance at the figures recording the age periods of the onset of blindness. In 1940, statistics then recorded that of the total blind population, the number said to have lost their sight from 0-1 year of age was 8,579, in 1941 the comparable figure was 8,599, and in 1942, 8,450. These are alarming figures, but when we remember that prior to 1914 such diseases as ophthalmia neonatorum were not compulsorily notifiable, and that very scanty preventive work was undertaken in any organised sense, perhaps it is not very surprising after all that these high percentages should have been revealed. From 1-5 years, in 1940 the number was 1,913, in 1941 the number was 1,818, and in 1942, 1,903. It must not be forgotten that we are here dealing with the age periods at which blindness occurred. In like manner the number from 10-20 years of age in 1940 was 3,736; in 1941, 3,707; and in 1942, 3,689. From 30 years of age upwards the numbers begin to rise appreciably, and at 70 years of age in 1942 the number was 13,537. These increases are attributable to a variety of causes which for want of space we cannot here discuss.

In the next article we propose to deal with statistics relating to employment and other cognate matters.

(To be continued)

THE ELDERLY BLIND: WHAT CAN THEY DO?

By A. E. BAWTREE, F.R.P.S.

I.—INTRODUCTORY

AMONG the Talking Books for the Blind, which I regularly receive, there are one or two which have been read from Braille transcriptions. Yet the words are as fluently spoken as are those by ordinary readers. People remark about this, as they do concerning the gifted blind musician, that such an extremely competent reader must have been born blind or lost his sight at a very early age. Doubtless this view is correct. But an extension of this general view is that the loss of sight after the age of sixty leaves the sufferer very little hope of accomplishing anything worth while. I consider that this view is incorrect, and the purpose of this series of articles is to refute it from my own personal experience.

I have always worn glasses but until late in life I suffered no material handicap through the condition of my sight. I have read a great deal, including books in type of any smallness; I have regularly used scientific instruments bearing minute calibrations, and I have been a craftsman in wood and metal of average efficiency, employing the usual methods of marking out by pencil, scribe and dividers. Then, at the age of sixty-two, my sight failed in a few weeks. The sudden deprivation of the amenities of life which are conferred by vision was a bitter blow, but my general usefulness has remained practically unimpaired. Here are some of the things which, during the past six years, I have been doing as efficiently, I believe, as they could be done by sighted people:

(a) Regularly mowing and rolling a lawn 22 yards long by 7 yards wide.

(b) Measuring and marking out the lawn for Badminton.

(c) Enjoying a really brisk one mile walk every day, without the aid of any form of guide or help.

(d) In the house, laying and lighting fires, and washing up the table articles after meals.

(e) Regularly making, and, when necessary, serving tea, coffee and cocoa, cutting bread and butter and making toast.

(f) Regularly using, cleaning, filling and trimming oil stoves.

(g) Doing all repairs, replacements and additions to the electric light system, gas and water services, and extending wireless.

(h) Accurately dispensing home medicines.

(i) Making the household supply of candles, tapers, matches, gas-lighters and soap.

(j) Operating a power-driven lathe and circular saw.

(k) Carrying out construction work in wood or metal, including cutting, filing, drilling, screw-cutting, rivetting, soldering, and the casting of lead and type metal.

(l) The construction, as a regular business proposition, of toys and other small articles.

(m) A good deal of writing for the press.

(n) The construction of the greater part of my own Braille writing machine, employing a new alphabet which I have devised and which can be fully mastered in a single day.

(o) Carrying out accurate specific gravity tests with solutions of sulphuric acid.

(p) Making up various compositions by heating together accurately weighed quantities of gums, waxes and resins, and casting these compositions in moulds.

I will conclude this first article by giving details of how I cared for the lawn. I made eighteen wooden pegs about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter; each was 1 foot long and had a block 2 inches square firmly secured to one end, the other being pointed. Nine of these I drove into the edge of the flower border at each end of the lawn, and spaced about 2 feet apart. I obtained two iron rods, each 4 feet long, pointed at one end and with a small ring formed in the other. Pulling up the end peg at each end of the lawn, and next to the left-hand side, I dropped the two iron rods into the holes so that they stood up above ground for about 3 feet. To one end of a length of string I fixed a wire hook, which I inserted in the ring upon one rod. The string was unwound from a flat board 1 foot long, with V-shaped nicks in its ends. Near the other end of the lawn, the string gave way to a piece of that coiled wire spring used for curtain rails, and at the end of the spring was a wire hook which I inserted into the top of the other rod. The

spring was in tension and so kept the string taut.

My lawn mower is fitted with a handle, by means of which it can be pulled, like a garden roller, instead of the usual propulsion by pushing. Guiding my feet by the edge of the lawn I pull the mower down and back again, right on the edge. Then I shift the mower 8 inches and pull both ways again. Going down the lawn I pull the mower by the left hand, while my right hand obtains guidance from the string. On the return journey, the functions of the hands are reversed. A second shift of the mower and double journey enable me to mow 2 feet of the lawn. Now I shift the rods and string to the positions of the next pair of pegs and resume the mowing as before. In this manner I cover the whole lawn. For the very last strip guidance is by the foot against the outside end of the lawn.

I do the rolling in the same manner as the mowing, except that the side shift of the roller is greater between each pair of strokes. On the other hand, each line is often gone over several times.

I clip the edges and end banks of the lawn with shears in the ordinary manner. It is easy to feel long grass left uncut. One word of caution. It is highly desirable that elderly people doing this clipping should have a board or other perfectly damp-proof material upon which to kneel, as they cannot afford to let damp get into their joints in the heedless manner in which youth can ignore precautions.

(To be continued)

PERSONALIA

A recent issue of the "Oxford Mail," under the title of "A Man of Vision," describes an interview given by Mr. T. H. TYLOR, "this big jolly man, with every faculty obviously sparking on all six." The article gives a vivid picture of a blind man of unusual ability and enterprise, who obtained a First in Bar Finals in 1928, and was shortly after elected a Fellow of Balliol and Tutor in Jurisprudence, who has won countless chess championships, is a member of about thirty Committees, and chairman of the National Institute's Education and Research Committee. "Hearing him talk so wisely, patiently and humorously, above all so far-sightedly," writes the reviewer, "I began to wonder who, after all, was blind and who was not. And what was blindness, anyway. . . ."

* * *

Miss BETTY MURIEL JANE SAUNDERS, Home Teacher with the Warwickshire Association for

the Blind, and a daughter of the late Colonel Saunders, who was one of the National Institute's voluntary Braille copyists and experts for many years, has been appointed County Secretary to the Gloucestershire County Association for the Blind.

It is interesting to note that Miss W. L. ADAMS, the Warwickshire Association's former Senior Home Teacher, was appointed last year to a similarly important post—Supervisor of the Western Counties Association for the Blind.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—

Percy Lavender, H.M.I., who served as one of the representatives of the Board of Education on the Joint Committee of the College of Teachers of the Blind and the National Institute for the Blind from its inception until its close. He took an active share in the compilation of the Report and the members of the Committee relied very greatly on his wise judgment and his powers of expression as a writer; the very fact that he was not a specialist in the world of blind education brought into the discussions a width of outlook that was of special value.

A. G. Harris, of Croydon, who for eleven years was Secretary of the Croydon Voluntary Association for the Blind and a great friend of the blind folk of Croydon.

W. H. Thurman, for many years one of the best-known figures in the world of blind administration. After serving for ten years as Clerk to the Birmingham Education Special Schools Sub-Committee, he was appointed Superintendent and Secretary of the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind in 1909, in succession to Mr. Henry Stainsby.

He was one of the earliest members of the Ministry of Health Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind, but resigned his seat on this Committee upon his appointment, with Mr. Miles Priestley, as an Inspector under the Ministry in 1920. It was a post for which his long personal knowledge of the blind specially fitted him. In January, 1931, he was appointed Director of Henshaw's Institution, Manchester, and held this post until September, 1937.

The past few months have taken heavy toll of some of those workers responsible for laying the foundations upon which the present structure of blind welfare has been soundly built, and in the death of Mr. Thurman we mourn the loss of yet another of those pioneers.

HOME TEACHERS SHOULD BE ORGANISED

By JOHN MOORE

EVER since the editorial entitled "Salute to Home Teachers" was published in the summer of 1941 I have waited with increasing anxiety to see if any of my more experienced colleagues would take up the point contained therein regarding the advisability or otherwise of creating a special organisation for Home Teachers. Although it would seem at first sight that Home Teachers generally are not particularly interested in this question, I have good reason to believe, from conversations which I have had during the last eighteen months with Home Teachers from all parts of the North of England, that sufficient interest could be aroused to make the inauguration of such an organisation possible. It has often been stated, both in public and private, that there are some areas in which the conditions of service for Home Teachers have not improved since 1921; this in spite of the fact that the standard of efficiency required of those taking the Home Teachers' Examination has been consistently raised; also it is common knowledge that many agencies employing Home Teachers make no provision whatever for superannuation. Although the blame for this state of affairs rests in the first place on the shoulders of employing authorities, it must be remembered that a considerable share of the responsibility must be borne by the Home Teachers themselves, since it is not likely that employers, whether they be Local Authorities or Voluntary Agencies, will, generally speaking, be prepared to grant improvements in conditions of service without some effort on the part of those who are to reap the benefit.

Having had sixteen years' experience in all the more important phases of Blind Welfare Work, as well as an equally long spell of activity in the wider field of organised labour, I have come to the conclusion that the time is now opportune for Home Teachers to get together in an organisation of their own for the purpose of improving their conditions of service in particular, and in order to play a more important part in the direction of Blind Welfare Work in general.

On more than one occasion I have heard people argue that Home Teachers, by sheer weight of numbers, could compel the College of Teachers of the Blind to cause its machinery to be adapted to the functions outlined above. Having considered this argument from every

angle, I consider that such a policy would be most unfair to the College on the one hand and utterly unworthy of Home Teachers who claim professional status on the other hand. The College of Teachers has from its inception been concerned with the academic rather than the economic position of its members, and I feel that it would be most undesirable from every standpoint if the College were to depart from that policy. I understand that the College is at the present time collecting information regarding the conditions of service of Home Teachers, but this fact should not in any way detract from the efficacy of a separate organisation. Far from advocating the setting up of an opposition camp, I feel that a Home Teachers' Organisation could co-operate most effectively with the College of Teachers; in fact, I would be one of the first to suggest that such an organisation should affiliate to the College *en bloc*, if this were constitutionally possible, whilst, at the same time, encouraging those Home Teachers who so desired to continue their individual membership of the College.

Apart from the economic advantages to be gained by combination, Home Teachers would create for themselves an opportunity, hitherto non-existent, of making their voices heard at the deliberations of those national bodies which are concerned with Blind Welfare in both the advisory and executive spheres. It is regrettable that because no organisation exists from which to select representatives, the collective point of view of Home Teachers is absent when such meetings as those of the National Advisory Committee and the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind are held. In my view, a claim to such representation would be irresistible were it to come from an officially recognised organisation of Home Teachers.

I have no desire to bore the general reader with detailed suggestions as to the most effective way of creating such an organisation as I have indicated, but if those who are specially interested care to communicate with me privately—4, Raley Square, Racecommon Road, Barnsley—I shall be pleased to go further into the matter.

In conclusion, I would remind those Home Teachers who may still be in some doubt as to what their attitude should be that "the most effective helping hand they can enlist is to be found at the end of their arm."

THE TOMLINSON REPORT

THE recommendations of this Report go a long way towards filling a gap in the Beveridge Plan. No Social Security scheme which does not recognise employment as the most constructive form of welfare can be a satisfactory answer to the economic problem of blindness. Our failure to generalise this principle during the last twenty years has meant that Blind Welfare has become comprehensive in a negative sense only.

There are many reasons for this negative attitude towards employment, but, undoubtedly, one of its main causes is that neither of the Blind Persons Acts placed a specific duty on local authorities to provide facilities for the employment of all blind persons capable of work. If an authority finds it less tiresome to pension off an active blind man, neither the District Auditor nor anyone else can question its right to do so. The recommendations of the Tomlinson Report that a specific duty should be imposed on local authorities to provide employment and training for all blind persons who can work is to be welcomed. The fact that this duty would form part of a general resettlement plan, and would be balanced by a specific obligation on industry as a whole, should make possible the development of a comprehensive and positive employment service.

The sheltered workshops will continue, under the Tomlinson Scheme, to provide employment for the majority of the blind. The fact that they will form an integral part of the national plan should make it possible to extend both the range of their production and the scope of their service. At the present time it is fair to say that the workshops cater only for those who go blind in early life and leave quite untouched the problem of blindness when it occurs in middle or later life. Workshops and Home Workers' Schemes together provide employment for less than 15 per cent. of the blind population in the age group 16-65 years.

It is fair to assume that local authorities will continue to delegate their functions, under the new scheme, to the existing workshops for the blind, but, faced with the duty of extending the scope of sheltered employment, they will look to the workshops to provide work suitable for blind persons in the older age groups. The Tomlinson Report itself does not make it clear whether the Regional Centres to be established under the control of the new Welfare Corporation will also be open to the blind, or whether it will be possible to dovetail the work of the blind into these Centres. The fact that the Public Welfare Corporation will have to satisfy itself that the work of pre-existing institutions is "efficient and in accordance with general policy" will bring about some degree of overall uniformity.

A new provision is that workshops which satisfy the standard of efficiency will be eligible for grants from the Exchequer and these grants will be paid through the medium of the Blind Persons Act authority. The Report indicates that the grants will be substantial but does not say whether they will cover augmentation of earnings as well as administration expenses. In this connection it is important to remember that the national Disability Pension provided for under the Beveridge Scheme is intended to meet the economic handicap of blindness. This, together with the grant system of the Tomlinson Report, would mean that the total cost of providing sheltered employment for the blind will be borne by the Exchequer and not by local authorities.

Blind Welfare is so wedded to the idea that workshops can only be run at a considerable loss that the elements which cause this loss are sometimes overlooked. It is in some measure true to say that in a general scheme of sheltered employment, having a monopoly in certain spheres of production, many of these elements would disappear. Blind workshops will have to turn over their production entirely to "articles which are in regular demand for Government or other public purposes, and which lend themselves to small scale manufacturing processes." The consumer of these goods will be expected to pay a price which is related to the cost of production and, with sure markets, and the possibility that raw materials will themselves be manufactured under the Scheme, it is fair to expect that the ratio of loss will be considerably reduced.

There is, however, much to be said for the argument that, even if the economic efficiency of sheltered employment can be toned up, that method of employment will be a less satisfactory solution to the problem of disability than selective placement in ordinary industry. The Tomlinson Committee sees these two methods as alternatives rather than opposites. So far as the blind are concerned, the

balance will be weighed in favour of sheltered employment, but there is no reason why that balance should not be adjusted after the Scheme comes into operation. The quota system is already familiar to those who have studied the German Disability Laws, and its application to the problem of blindness in this country will receive a general welcome. The point should, however, be made that the Tomlinson Committee regards placement in ordinary industry as particularly suitable to those whose disability is not serious or can be compensated for by skill. In Blind Welfare such people will be found only in the younger age groups. The tendency of the war-time employment campaign has been to seek placement in industry for those who would not normally be eligible for workshop employment. This tendency will have to be reversed if we are to reap the full benefit from the quota system.

The extent to which the quota system will be available for non-industrial employees is not clearly stated in the Report. A good case can, and must, be made for including telephonists, shorthand typists, kiosk proprietors and possibly even masseurs within the quota. To make that case a reasonable one, however, Blind Welfare must first put its own house in order and be prepared to give a quota of administrative and executive positions in the service to qualified blind and partially sighted persons.

Many parts of the Scheme are not clear or require further discussion. While giving a preliminary welcome to the Tomlinson Plan, we must make sure that the whole problem is considered.

THE EDITOR.

WE LIVE AGAIN—II.

By F. BURVILLE

THE 21st May, 1914, was one of those glorious summer days of which the old-time poets remind us. I have a vivid recollection of the loveliness of this day because it was at this time I left the Industrial School to take my first steps into the world as a man. I knew that I was a man, not from a knowledge of what the world expected of me as such, but because the Principal told me so prior to leaving.

This much I will say concerning the School: it had turned me out physically strong; so much so, that I was capable of walking up to a distance of 30 miles without feeling really tired. I could preserve a straight arm balance at the apex of a bridge ladder or upon a horizontal bar, and the feat held no fears for me. Yet I lost quite a bit of sleep during my last night fearing lest I should not make good, now that I was to play the part of a man. Three years out of nineteen is quite a long time to be shut away from the world, and I was conscious of fears for the morrow.

A few of us boys from the old school had studiously avoided mixing with pupils whose ages ranged from 25 to 30 years and over, and were styled "Men of the World." The kind of world exemplified by their behaviour did not appeal to us who still cherished the finer view of the world gained from our old school. We, in our ignorance, conveyed our views to them, to which they invariably replied with words to the effect that we "Young Bucks" would soon be brought to earth and discover for ourselves how cold and hard kerb stones could be. Now that I am older and have a fuller knowledge of men and things, I realize what a big mistake it was to herd boys with fully-grown men. But I was quite sure the world possessed plenty of nice people, especially on a day like this one in May.

The manager of the small workshop where I was now to begin life anew was totally blind. He was a devout Christian, and most considerate to his workers. As manager he was responsible to a Committee for every phase of the business side of things, and appeared to be very capable; and I have every reason to believe he gave complete satisfaction to his employers for many years. The managerial salary was at the rate of £65 per annum; my own wage was at the rate of £33 per annum, which was, in my view, quite a satisfactory beginning.

Soon I was singing in a Church choir, where I gained the friendship of the traditional family butcher and village policeman, who, when in our church, sat one on either side of me. The choir master was not nearly so good a musician and teacher as some blind men of my acquaintance, and I often found myself picturing one of our qualified organists in charge of the choir.

My circle of friends became increasingly broader as time passed, and altogether life had taken on a very cheerful aspect. The day came when I met for the first time a few blind men whom I can best describe as being a superior type of Group "A" from the old school. From the conversation which ensued it would seem that my newly made acquaintances lived rather aimless lives save one, who was a clergyman. It soon became apparent to me that the men in question harboured a grievance against the world; they were highly talented men, but life offered no outlet for their abilities. I put the question to them with the pertinacity of untrained youth: "Don't you think you are inclined to take the line of least resistance to life's difficulties instead of fostering the natural impulse within us to strive against those forces which tend to retard our progress?" Derision and caustic comment greeted my youthful

speech, but nothing daunted I appealed to the clergyman to arbitrate on a matter of sound philosophy, i.e., that where there exists a measure of economic security, such a circumstance might serve to influence one's attitude towards life. Needless to say, judgment was given in support of my claim.

I believe that there is nothing more beautiful in our created world than young men and women well set up in mind and body, who are keen to start out upon life's adventure. There are few incidents more tragic than when such young people become cynical through deferred hope and enforced idleness.

I believe that one of the major problems confronting heads of Welfare Departments to-day is that of securing suitable remunerative employment for highly talented blind persons. It is gratifying to know that the problem is being tackled, despite the enormous difficulties with which it is encompassed. Now that increasing numbers of our blind children are to receive a secondary school education there is every possibility of an influx to the group of well-trained young men and women in the not too distant future, with the inevitable consequence of the problem becoming enlarged. Fortunately for us, these added difficulties will not act as a deterrent to those who have the matter in hand. The present high standards of our welfare services were not built by evading difficulties, and none know this better than the officials who have the placement problem to solve.

Since my early school days, of which I have written, it has been my privilege and pleasure to meet blind people of widely varying pursuits, tastes and accomplishments; and from this experience it has been made abundantly clear to me that the life of the average blind person has been enriched beyond most of our dreams of 30 years ago. But for the highly talented folk the story is not quite such a happy one. It is not my wish to appear ungracious, but it does strike me very forcibly that the solution of the placement problem might be aided if the various services got together in a true spirit of co-operation, placing foremost the future welfare of our talented young citizens. Surely none of us is wholly satisfied with the present state of affairs which govern the future prospects of the people under immediate discussion, and yet it seems to me we have it in our power to broaden the scope of employment within our own spheres of activity. We hear from time to time of clever blind people, but they do not come among their brethren to entertain them nor educate them. Our welfare agencies publicise the outstanding ability of these blind folk with a view to getting them placed in the seeing world, yet

stubbornly declining to give employment within their own domain. A truly co-ordinated effort would entail the complete abolition of prejudice, and any employing agency should insist upon the blind employee being not only qualified in his or her work, but correctly disciplined.

Is it possible, through a representative Committee, to set up a department which would serve as a clearing house, or perhaps, better still, an agency from which qualified blind persons might be drawn to fill posts of various kinds? The blind community could be enriched beyond measure by our own people, and the advantages would be mutually enjoyed if all-round musicians, lecturers on specialized subjects, dramatists, companions to blind people of culture, school teachers, home teachers, shorthand typists, handicraft instructors and piano tuners, could, through the agency, be drawn upon by schools, workshops, home teaching services, etc.

This would be merely a beginning of better things to come. The seeing world would be quick to seize upon the services of an artist who had shown that he was worth employing.

Finally, the element of struggle need not be eliminated. Competition should be encouraged between the various classes, and a tendency on the part of the members towards indolence, improper behaviour during practice, etc., should be sternly dealt with.

(To be continued)

"COMPLETE IN HIM!"

"COMPLETE in Him!" Sight gone, and hearing failing,
What can life hold in store for such as I?
Blind eyes, look up, the stars of night are paling,
The "Sun of Righteousness" is drawing nigh.
Deaf ears, list well; the gracious Holy Spirit
Can speak to you, though Nature's ear be dim,
'Tis given to you in double force to hear it,
Then grieve not so! "Ye are complete in Him."

"Complete in Him!" So few and small my talents,
I have no "mighty works" my days to fill.
Leave that to Jesus; He'll adjust the balance;
He asks but that you do His holy Will.
Your words, your prayers, your little acts of kindness
May have an influence reaching earth's wide brim,
Till those, in darkness greater than your blindness,
Shall see your light . . . "Ye are complete in Him."

"Complete in Him!" But I am poor and lonely.
I cannot go to spread His Mighty Word;
I have myself, my poor self only,
To lay down at the feet of my loved Lord.
But you can love! Then just go right on loving;
That needs no master brain or stalwart limb,
But just a heart at his dictation moving;
If ye can love, "ye are complete in Him."

"Complete in Him!" When this life's day is over
And of His fullness we shall taste and know,
We'll see Him as He is, our friend, our lover,
And praise Him that we lacked while here below.
When all are met where nought again shall sever,
We'll see and hear with eyes and ears undim,
And bless His boundless love that faileth never,
When all, for ever, are "complete in Him."

RUTH A. LAST.

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION”

By W. H. COATES

IV.—“The Girls”

TOM'S relations with young women were, on the whole, unsatisfactory. In their absence he dreamed romantically of them; in their presence he was so shy that he became a “crashing bore.” He lacked that invaluable weapon—a quick and witty tongue, which can outclass even the deadly execution of the eyes. His ballroom small talk in its fitful and laboured cheerfulness resembled that heard in a dentist's waiting-room.

But with Phyllis Harker it was different. She was an intelligent girl, and not flirtatious. She, like Tom, was a student of music. In music they found an inexhaustible source of conversation . . .

Until that dreadful day.

One afternoon Tom arrived at the Harkers' front door to keep an appointment with Phyllis, and was surprised to hear that she was out. No, she had not left a message. No, the maid didn't know when she would be back. Had she forgotten? He was sure he was punctual, and she had fixed the time herself. He was a bit annoyed. “I'll come back later,” he said, intending not to. Then he turned and ran down the steps.

But, either from haste or chagrin, he sheered off over the side (there being no balustrade) and fell plump into a bed of carnations.

The maid screamed and rushed to the rescue, but Tom was up and away. Shame gave him speed. His one thought was to be out of sight. He dashed for the gate.

But agitation had so confused his senses that he ran off the drive on to the lawn, and immediately crashed sprawling over a small table and an empty chair. There was a hideous sound of splintering wood and fluttering papers, and a glass or something went bowling across the grass to smash itself on some obstruction.

The maid gasped and moaned, and thought of giving notice. Tom, dazed by the abruptness and the magnitude of his degradation, bolted for the gate in a wild despair. By good luck he reached it while the maid was still dithering among the scattered papers.

Yes, he reached it, and then stopped dead. It was the voice of Phyllis: “Hallo, Tom; so sorry I'm late!”

There he stood stained obtrusively with garden soil, his tie wrenched sideways, his hair tousled, his face bleeding; his whole demeanour

that of a runaway thief or a lunatic. Surely the last humiliation!

She tried to persuade him to stay, but he had suffered too much for that. The pride of the male had been wounded, and so had the pride of the blind man. He had become ridiculous or, worse, pitiable to her; and it was through his blindness that he had become so. Had it been through absent-mindedness or weak ankles it would not have been half so bad. Through his blindness he had shown himself unequal to his physical environment. He had failed to demonstrate that blindness is of no account. Moreover, when circumstances had tripped him, he had lost his self-control, and cut an even more outrageous figure in consequence.

“But do stay to tea, Tom!” He thought of the family—the looks, the whispered explanations—how ultra-cheerful and extra chatty they would be with him. And that maid!

“I can't possibly.”

Later, as he brooded in quietness upon the misadventure, his sense of humour bobbed up to the surface. He began to see that the most foolish part of the whole thing was the way he himself had taken it. Why hadn't he laughed when he fell off those steps instead of bolting like a rabbit! That would have put the incident in its right place at once. That would have avoided all his subsequent misconduct and given the right cue. The happy relations between himself and his friends would not have been disturbed. How they must be discussing and condemning his too sensitive pride, his subsequent sullenness, his utter loss of poise under so slight a strain.

And Phyllis—she who really mattered! Yet she had seen him in the height of his madness and had not seemed disgusted; nay, had tried to make light of it. Phyllis was loyal. Phyllis could be trusted to understand. Why bother about one's dignity with a friend like that?

So it came about that he wrote a complete and open acknowledgment of his part in the affair, with apologies.

The next time he went to the Harkers' house there was one small doubt buzzing in his mind. But this, too, was banished when he found that no handrail or other foolproof device had been fitted to the front door steps.

(To be continued)

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Domiciliary Assistance

SIR,—I am particularly interested in the question raised by "W.M.D." in the March issue of THE NEW BEACON. I do so heartily agree. I feel the suggestion that the Relieving Officer should assess the blind person's income, owing to shortage of staff due to the war, is most dangerous and completely against the spirit of the Blind Persons Acts. One has no feeling against the Relieving Officers themselves, who are often quite as public spirited and anxious to help their people as the Home Teachers.

The root of the trouble is that blind people, after having been removed from the care of the Public Assistance Department, would, in effect, revert to their old status. As "W.M.D." remarks, there is nothing to tell the blind persons' neighbours that the Relieving Officer is not calling at the house as the Relieving Officer administering Poor Relief.

From long experience among blind people needing domiciliary assistance, I know that it is one of the greatest causes of satisfaction with them that their affairs should be dealt with by the Associations for the Blind. Quite apart from any other point, the visits of the Home Teacher do not mean that a person is receiving domiciliary assistance, while the visits of the Relieving Officer can be for no other purpose.

I am disturbed by this tendency, and so are many other welfare workers who understand the blind person's satisfaction at being removed from the category of those receiving Poor Law Relief. In these more enlightened days, the whole tendency is to remove the stigma of Poor Law Relief from thrifty, careful people, who, through no fault of their own, have fallen upon bad times. The Supplementary Pension has done great service in connection with this. Surely, blind people cannot be allowed, for any reason whatsoever, to slip back into their old position, even if the position is not actual but apparent.

Yours, etc.,

(Miss) S. M. G. GASTER,

Organising Secretary,

Warwickshire Association for the Blind.

To the Editor.

Employment Problems

SIR,—I was disappointed that my letter in your November issue, which raised several important questions, only produced a rebuke from

a correspondent who took a very poor view of my effort.

Your March issue is more promising, and we should all be grateful to Dr. Whitfield for securing a contribution on the important subject of Blind Employment from Mr. J. F. Clunk, whose experience and breadth of vision indicate that he is one of the foremost authorities on this subject.

I am sorry indeed to have given Dr. Whitfield the impression of harmful pessimism, as I really think that we have ample ground for cheerful optimism.

My note on Mr. Clunk's experience was only one of six points raised in my letter, and it was taken from "What of the Blind," page 125, published by the American Foundation for the Blind. I strongly recommend this article to all interested in the subject, and regret that when quoting only a small part I may have given a wrong impression. At the same time I am glad to have attracted attention to one of my six questions and obtained an answer from a very high authority. That particular difficulty, regarding the placing of the blind in sighted industry, was one which we also have experienced, and some of us may freely admit that, although we have given much thought to the subject prior to the war, we had not established an efficient follow-up system such as that which Mr. Clunk has developed. The war has provided us with an unusual opportunity, and in this area, out of a Register of 1,600 blind persons, we have 167 in sighted employment, compared with 19 before the war. We are keeping in touch as far as possible with workers and employers, and learning much.

The notes by Mr. Clunk on his long experience are proving very useful, and his views are rapidly being confirmed.

Two of my six questions have now been answered, one by the publication of the Beveridge Report, and the other through the interest of Dr. Whitfield—but there still remain four, which I hope may have the attention of those interested, and which you may permit me to deal with again on another page.

Finally, may I express my thanks to Dr. Whitfield for his interest, and I trust that he does not still regard me as a harmful pessimist.

Yours, etc.,

H. S. EDKINS,

General Supt. and Sec.,

Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind.

To the Editor.

Braille Reading

SIR,—I have been much interested in reading the correspondence in THE NEW BEACON with regard to Braille reading, and find, rather to my surprise, that my own reading method differs somewhat from that of every one of the writers. I therefore describe it in the hope that it may prove of interest.

Like many Braille readers, I read with both hands, but with me, after the first half-line of each page, the hands work virtually independently, except in the rare instance of a momentary hold-up of one, when the other is at once brought to the rescue. After the middle of the top line of a page, till which, as I said, both hands work together, the right hand finishes the line by itself, the left hand meanwhile scouting forward along the next line till the middle point, when it is again the turn of the right hand to do its bit.

Reading in the train one day (my custom whenever I am travelling) I had the feeling one sometimes gets that someone was intently looking at me. At length a lady addressed me:

"Do please excuse me," she said, "I have been watching you reading for some time and can't understand how you do it. Do you read from the middle of each line?"

When "reading at ease," as it were, I don't know whether I divide the lines into precise mathematical halves, but I believe that in proportion as I am trying to read my best—when ever I am reading aloud, for instance—the division of labour between the two hands is practically exact.

I believe that the acquisition of speed in reading is thoroughly worth while—so much so as to well repay some expenditure of time and trouble. Apart from the use of both hands, which I heartily recommend, my recipe is to read, and re-read, some splendidly worthwhile book or passage so that, while the words are not actually learnt by heart, they are familiar enough to be more and more quickly apprehended by the fingers, which presently form the habit of quick reading. This speed gives reading a zest and a sparkle which makes it positively exhilarating. I have not given myself a formal speed test for a good many years now, but the other day I read aloud at a public meeting just over eighteen large interpoint pages in approximately five and twenty minutes. That was, as the Chairman said, "Rather on the fast side!"

Yours, etc.,

WILLIAM J. SHARP.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blind Boy Gains Life Saving Certificate.—E. Skene, a blind boy at the Cardiff Institutes' School, has obtained the Intermediate Certificate of the Royal Life Saving Society for practical knowledge of rescue and ability to render aid to the drowning and apparently drowned. This entitles him to the Bronze Medallion, which will be presented to him after the war. Very few, if any, blind boys and girls have attained this distinction.

Music Successes at the Preston Homes for the Blind.—At the recent examinations of the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, London, the following pupils of the combined Preston and Henshaw's Schools were successful:

I. Charnock (Preston) Preliminary, 87/99 Pass.

I. Dodd (Henshaw's), Grade II, 106/150, Pass

F. Davies (Henshaw's), Grade III, 130/150 Distinction.

D. Whittam (Preston), Grade VII, 132/150 Distinction.

During the past sixteen months twenty entrants to these examinations have gained twenty certificates, a striking testimony to the teaching ability and painstaking efforts of the music mistress, Miss E. Day, who is herself totally blind.

Blind Lacemaker. Miss Kitterick, who recently died after more than fifty years' residence in an Ulster Home for the Blind, was an exquisite lace-maker, whose fine craftsmanship always aroused keen interest in visitors to the Home.

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Southern Regional Association for the Blind.—The Report for 1941-2 gives an interesting account of varied work done, including the compilation of a Central Register, the holding of two Conferences for Home Teachers, a Refresher Course at Birmingham (again for Home Teachers) and the holding of an important General Conference, addressed by Miss Horsburgh. The statistical tables at the end of the Report have many noteworthy features. That eight new cases of blind children under the age

of one year were registered during the year is a disquieting fact; that in London about 50 per cent. of the blind children on the register were either educated in ordinary schools or were not at school at all is a surprising one; and that over 400 blind persons in the region are described as "trained but unemployed" is also disquieting. Can these figures be explained?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

		s.	d.
19009	Addinsell, R. Theme from the "Warsaw Concerto"	0	6
19010	Heuson, J. Moonlight becomes You, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19011	Noel, A. Johnny and Mary, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19012	Warren, H. I've got a Gal in Kalamazoo, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6

BRAILLE BOOKS.

Forthcoming Panda.

No. 64. **Introducing Shakespeare**, by G. B. Harrison.
2 vols. 1s. net the set.

Shakespeare is always topical, and here is the latest book on him, giving the "stop press" information on his life and work and telling what modern Shakespearean scholars and critics are doing. This little book is the ideal "key" to "Shakespeare for the million," absorbingly enticing the reader to the plays and poems themselves.

MOON BOOKS.

4645-4646 **Portrait of Jennie**, by Robert Nathan.
2 vols. (Limited Edition.)

APPARATUS.

Manilla Paper.

Supplies of No. 1 Manilla Paper, large size, stiffened by special treatment for Braille manuscript book work are now obtainable from the National Institute, price 1s. per lb. to sighted customers and 9d. per lb. to blind customers.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

	Vols.
Philosophy and Logic:	
Stebbing, L. S. Modern Introduction to Logic	12
Theology:	
Davis, D. R. The two Humanities: Christian interpretation of history in the light of war	4
Temple, William. Readings in St. John's Gospel	6
Sociology:	
British Social Services, Report on	5

	Vols.
Hicks, J. R. Value and Capita: Principles of economic theory	6
Schwarzenberger, G. Power Politics: Study of international relations and post-war planning	9
English Literature:	
Addison. Selections from "The Spectator," ed. J. H. Lobban	4
Belloc, Hilaire. Hills and the Sea (Essays) ..	3
Browning, Robert. Poetry and Prose, ed. Milford	3
Evans, B. I. Short History of English Literature	3
Lucas, F. L. Critical Thoughts in Critical Days	1
Parsons. Alan Parsons' Book: A Story in Anthology	3
German:	
Schiller. Maria Stuart, ed. L. A. Rhoades ..	5
Hebrew:	
Ezekiel	2

BRAILLE CENSORSHIP.

Much unnecessary delay is caused by failure to observe the correct procedure when sending mail to the National Institute for censoring. All packets should be sent to Censorship Department, National Institute for the Blind, 24, Lansdowne Road, Bournemouth, Hants. The name and address of the person to whom the packet is to be sent should not appear on the outside of the packet, but must be written on an enclosed label, ready for forwarding. Mention should also be made of the name and address of the sender.

N.I.B. ROYAL ALBERT HALL BOX.

The National Institute's Box at the Royal Albert Hall will be available for blind music lovers this year. Tickets for most regular concerts may be obtained, free of charge, by application to the Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1. Requests for tickets should reach the Institute at least one week before the date of the concert for which they are required.

NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND.

New Supplementary Catalogue.

A Supplementary Catalogue of books added to the Library from 1937 to December 1942 is now published, and can be obtained, price 8d. post free, from: The Secretary, National Library for the Blind, 35, Great Smith Street, Westminster, S.W.1, or The Branch Secretary, National Library for the Blind (Northern Branch), 5, St. John Street, Manchester, 3.

VACANCIES IN HOMES, ETC.

31st March, 1943.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Northampton Bloomfield, Leamington	—
Wavertree House, Hove	—
The Haven, Scarborough	—
Fair Lawn, Totteridge (for convalescence or short periods of rest)	10
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea ..	—
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring ..	—
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay ..	1
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth	2

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

Notice to Advertisers.

As war conditions occasionally cause unavoidable delay in production and publication, advertisers are advised to make the closing date for receipt of applications not earlier than the 1st of the month following date of issue.

WANTED—for a Harrison Sun Circular Ribber, a 60 cylinder $4\frac{1}{2}$ diameter, or a 54 cylinder (dial and needles to match) or dial only for a 60 cylinder. Write "A," c/o Editor, THE NEW BEACON, 224, Great Portland Street, W.1.

WARWICKSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND.

Certificated Home Teacher required. Must drive car. Commencing salary £169 per annum, rising by yearly increments of £7 10s. to £250, plus cost-of-living bonus, plus travelling expenses and allowance for subsistence. Successful applicant will be required to join the Association's Superannuation Scheme. Apply: The Secretary, 14, Northgate Street, Warwick.

THE CLEVELAND AND SOUTH DURHAM INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND, MIDDLESBROUGH, require a sighted female Home Visitor/Teacher for work in a rural area.

Salary at the rate of £156 per annum if certificated, plus cost of living bonus (lower salary if uncertificated).

Application forms can be obtained from the Secretary-Superintendent for return by April 24th, 1943.

LONDON COUNTY COUNCIL. Temporary Home Visitors (women) of the blind required. 60s. by 4s. to 88s. a week, plus a temporary addition (at present) of 10s. a week. Preference given to candidates possessing Home Teaching Certificate of College of Teachers of the Blind, with experience of social welfare work, good education and address, ability to prepare reports, power of discernment and adaptability.

Application forms, returnable by 1st May, 1943, from Clerk of the Council (H), County Hall, London, S.E.1. (Send stamped addressed foolscap envelope.) Canvassing disqualifies.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF OLDHAM.

BLIND PERSONS ACT (1920) COMMITTEE.

Applications are invited for appointment as Home Teacher of the Blind. Applicants must have passed the Home Teachers' Examination. Salary £166 per annum, plus cost of living bonus, at present 13s. per week for men and 10s. per week for women.

The appointment is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, and the successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination and to reside within the County Borough.

Canvassing or submitting testimonials from any member of the Council or of any Committee appointed by the Council will be a disqualification.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials, to be forwarded to the undersigned by Thursday, 29th April, 1943.

MAURICE HARRISON,
Director of Education.

Education Offices, Oldham.
6th April, 1943.

SIGHTED INSTRUCTOR REQUIRED FOR TELEPHONY, capable taking charge and training blind persons in Braille, Braille Shorthand, Typewriting and Switchboard. Apply—Secretary, Institute for the Blind, Cardiff.

HOME TEACHERS' EXAMINATION, 1943.

Those anxious to qualify for the College of Teachers' Certificate are invited to apply for details of a Postal Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham R.I. for the Blind, Harborne, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

BEDDING FOREMAN REQUIRED, must be capable of preparing costs, buying, and controlling labour; knowledge of modern mattress making. Applicants should be over military age or exempt. Write stating salary suggested (war bonus payable), experience, age, and two references, to The Manager, Royal Institution for the Blind, 12, Borough Road, Sunderland.

WEST OF ENGLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND Exeter

Applications are invited for the post of **Assistant Master** (resident or non-resident). Previous experience in a School for blind children not essential. Salary in accordance with Burnham Scale II, with one increment for services in a special School and War Bonus. If the candidate does not hold the Diploma of the College of Teachers of the Blind he will be required to take the examination within two years of appointment. The successful applicant will be required to undergo medical examination. Forms of application to be obtained from the Secretary of the Institution, St. David's Hill, Exeter, and to be returned immediately with copies of three recent testimonials.

THE WIGAN, LEIGH AND DISTRICT WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND.

General Superintendent and Secretary wanted by the Wigan, Leigh and District Workshops for the Blind.

Salary £450 per annum, plus War bonus. Applicants must have had previous practical experience of the work; be of good education and be "sighted." Full particulars of the terms of the appointment and the duties to be performed, together with blank forms of Application, may be obtained from the undersigned, to whom applications (accompanied by copies of three recent testimonials) must be delivered not later than Thursday, 29th April, 1943.

WILLIAM HENRY TYRER,
Town Clerk.

Town Clerk's Office,
Municipal Buildings,
Library Street,
Wigan.

8th April, 1943.

The New **BEACON**

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 317.

MAY 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

WAR PRODUCTION IN WORKSHOPS FOR THE BLIND

By S. W. STARLING.

Secretary and General Manager, the Incorporated Association for Promoting the General Welfare of the Blind

THERE is a tendency on the part of some people engaged in blind welfare work, and particularly among those concerned with the employment of the blind at the present time, to try to visualise the conditions which will prevail after the war. Both the Beveridge and the Tomlinson Reports give us much food for thought. It is well, therefore, that we should look ahead in the hope of further developments in our services, on what we hope will be a broader and less constricted plan.

This disposition is to be commended and should be encouraged, but while we are trying to peer into the future, let us not lose sight of what has been going on around us since the outbreak of the war. Each of us, in our different spheres, has felt the impact of the war and alas, in some instances, it has had a direct effect with shattering results ; but what I wish to dwell on in this short article, is the effect the war has had on employment in workshops for the blind.

In last month's issue of THE NEW BEACON, Mr. Edkins described how employment in sighted industries had been opened up for the blind, and what was being done to embrace the opportunities, thus afforded, of placing blind persons in munition and other factories. Publicity to this policy has been given from time to time, and it is good that we should know of any new venture undertaken by the blind. We cannot but admire the spirit of independence which has prompted many blind persons to seek their livelihood in a sphere outside the sheltered workshop, and the reports received show that, in the majority of cases, they are giving satisfaction to their employers. What effect this will have on the general employment of the blind after the war is not the object of this article, but much I think can be learnt from the experiences now being gained. What has been going on outside our own workshops is one part of a very interesting story, but one part only of the bigger story of what the blind are doing to help the war effort. The other side of the picture is my concern, and I want to tell you something about it.

To most trained blind workers has come the opportunity to serve their country through their own particular craft, in other words, their every-day job has taken on a wider significance, and has become

the means by which that service can be given. The familiar, and perhaps what was felt by many to be commonplace, has taken on a new meaning because the work of their hands has become an integral part of the nation's production to supply our gigantic war machinery. How the production of the blind has been harnessed to this machinery is the outcome of a certain amount of planning and co-operation between the Government departments and blind workshop officials, and this co-operation speaks well for the spirit which now exists between the organisations for the blind dealing with employment. Nearly every workshop manager has, to a greater or lesser degree, helped to forge a link in the chain which joins the production of the blind to that of the country generally. Thus it has become possible for the small as well as for the large workshop to make a direct contribution to the national effort. In this manner, therefore, the blind worker, at his local workshop, is doing as important a job of work as the blind man or woman working in a munition factory, and equally too, is the home-worker, for there are now many who, although working in their own homes, are producing the armaments of war.

There is no need for me to describe the psychological effect this new demand on their labour has produced. It has created in them a feeling of comradeship with their brothers-in-arms with whom many of them would now be marching but for their visual handicap. For many of them it means longer hours of work to meet the urgent demand for their products, but these longer hours are given ungrudgingly. It is true that overtime means higher wages, but it requires something more than the monetary reward to keep men hard at it after a normal tiring day's work.

As to the volume of work produced, it is, no doubt, difficult to estimate, but a few facts will help one to realise its extent. It covers a very wide range of blind-made products, so that most of the men and women employed in the trades we undertake have been drawn into this war-time labour group. It is impossible for me to give exact figures covering war-time production in blind workshops. For some reason or other, managers are sometimes adverse to providing statistics. One can sympathise with this attitude and particularly at the present time when with depleted clerical staffs, they are required to fill up a number of forms for the various Government departments. Needless to say, a demand from a non-Government department is apt to be shelved.

The Annual Report of the National Association of Workshops for the Blind for the year 1941-42

shows that the total value of goods produced by the workshops, from whom returns had been received, amounted to over £101,000. This gives some idea of the volume of work executed, but a closer analysis of work undertaken reveals that since the war started, or rather, since the workshops acted jointly on Government work, they have produced the following :—

Over 32,000 Baskets ;
nearly 20,000 Mats ;
over 63,000 Brushes ;
over 18,000 Mattresses

and approximately 47,000 pairs of Hospital Bed Stockings, to say nothing of hundreds of gym-mats and yards of camouflage netting.

This list by no means represents the total production of the workshops for war purposes, as some institutions have contracted for Government supplies outside the co-operative plan now in existence. But how far the above list falls short of the total production is difficult to say.

One important fact should be remembered, that work undertaken for Government departments guarantees supplies of necessary materials, whereas materials for non-Government work are becoming more difficult to obtain. It therefore behoves managers of blind workshops to share in Government contracts if they wish, as I am sure they do, to safeguard the employment of their workers.

Whatever job of work we are called upon to do it has an aspect apart from the mere execution of the work itself. In our work as managers, for instance, there is the humanitarian aspect which is something quite apart from our daily executive work, and I feel that blind workers, and for that matter, all workers who are engaged, as so many are to-day, on the big job of war production, must apprehend the devotional aspect of their work. The mattress-maker knows that the result of his labour will give rest to the fatigued airman. The blind woman knitting hospital bed stockings is making her contribution to the great work of the medical service. The mat-maker can picture in his mind the antics of the young recruit as he trips lightly over the vaulting horse on to the gymnasium mat he has made. Consider, too, the mental processes of the basket-maker whose handicraft covers so wide a range of service ; panniers for the forces, in which will be carried the tools with which the fighting forces will meet the enemy ; soiled-linen baskets for the hospitals ; baskets for the carrier-pigeon, and baskets galore for the Ministry of Food. The brush-maker, too, can take a pride in his work when he reads of the exploits of our tanks, knowing, as

he does, that the brushes he has made have helped to keep them lubricated.

It is, I think, the pressing need for their work which gives it a zest and an importance which it has never had before.

The blind craftsman engaged on essential

needs has indubitably more than at any time in his life justified the money spent on his training and equally, too, it can be said, that the workshop for the blind has in these inspiring days proved itself to be a justifiable proposition.

HOME NEWS

New Pensions Bill Benefits Blind Persons.—Under the Pensions and Determination of Needs Bill, introduced in the House of Commons on 11th May by Mr. Ernest Brown, the Minister of Health, the Government propose to confer some additional benefits on a large number of pensioners and others in receipt of State allowances.

Amongst other things, the Bill makes changes in the method of calculating the private resources of applicants for supplementary pensions, unemployment assistance, and financial assistance for the blind. At present such persons are entitled to have treated as capital assets not immediately available to meet the applicant's need any money or investments up to £300. The first £25 is disregarded, and every complete £25 after the first is treated as producing a weekly income of 1s. The Bill proposes (1) to increase this maximum of £300 to £400 and (2) to reduce the "notional" weekly income per £25 of capital from 1s. to 6d. This new method of calculating resources will add some shillings a week to the pensions and allowances of a number of applicants and will increase the number who will qualify for allowances. The new maximum of £400 is in addition to any sum up to £375 of new money which may have been lent to the Government during the war, of which no account is taken in assessing capital resources.

The Bill also proposes the abolition of the "household means" test now applied to applicants for outdoor relief under the Poor Law and for financial aid for the blind under the Blind Persons Acts. Another clause of the Bill provides that, in calculating the means of a blind person or of the husband or wife of a blind person, no account shall be taken of any financial aid given by a Local Authority.

The Talking Book Service.—The period during which Lord Nuffield has generously subscribed £5,000 a year for the development of the Talking Book Service for the Blind has now ended. Mr. W. McG. Eagar, Secretary-General of the National Institute for the Blind, and Mr. Godfrey Robinson, Chairman of the Industries

Committee, to which the Talking Book Sub-Committee is responsible, have both expressed to Lord Nuffield the heartfelt thanks of the Council, Committee, Sub-Committee, and the blind who benefit by the invention, for his munificent gift, amounting in total to £37,500, which has enabled the project for the provision of one of the greatest compensations for blindness, ranking with Braille and Broadcasting, to be launched and carried safely through the experimental stage. In acknowledging these expressions of thanks, Lord Nuffield says how delighted he is to know that his early support of the Talking Book scheme has had such a successful outcome and how much he looks forward to the time when hopes for the post-war developments will be fully realised.

The National Institute for the Blind and St. Dunstan's have undertaken to meet the future cost of the Talking Book Service jointly, each in proportion to its own interests in the scheme, and to expand it as far as possible under war conditions. It is hardly necessary to add that expansion can only be very slow in view of the present difficulties in supplying machines, although a limited number is still being made, but the important point is that the Talking Book Service will be maintained for the benefit of all those who now possess machines. The production of new Talking Books in this country is being steadily continued and a certain number of new titles will be available from America.

The growth of the Talking Book Library has led to overcrowding at the Headquarters of the National Institute, but additional premises a few doors from Headquarters have now been obtained which will provide ample room for the Library, for the servicing of machines, and other work involved. All communications and containers should, however, continue to be addressed to the National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

Northern Counties' Council Meeting.—The General Council of the Northern Counties Association for the Blind met at Darlington on February 25th, and devoted a considerable amount of time to the discussion of the Bever-

idge and Tomlinson Reports. The Secretary had prepared a memorandum dealing with these important subjects, and introduced the discussion on the Beveridge Report. He stated that as one of the recommendations of that Report was that a new scheme for blind welfare should be prepared, he felt that it was desirable that the General Council should begin straight away to consider what they wanted. In the discussion that followed the Chairman expressed regret that more of the recommendations made by the Regional Bodies to the Beveridge Committee were not embodied in the Report, but he spoke warmly of the "wonderful grasp of the whole subject which Sir William displayed."

In the discussion on the Tomlinson Report Councillor Clydesdale said that he regarded it as of extreme importance, and he was inclined to think that Government action upon it would be taken before action on the Beveridge plan. Several of those present referred to their personal contacts in past years with Mr. Tomlinson, who had "done yeoman service for the blind" of Lancashire.

Wireless Appeal for the Greater London Fund.

—An Appeal on behalf of Greater London's 14,000 blind will be made in the BBC's Week's Good Cause on Sunday, June 6th, at 8.40 p.m. Major Christopher Stone, D.S.O., M.C., has very kindly consented to make the broadcast. Recently he visited two of the London Workshops, and will tell in his appeal of the work he witnessed.

Donations should be sent to Christopher Stone, Greater London Fund for the Blind, Westminster Bank, 154, Harley Street, W.1.

Geranium Day.—The twenty-first anniversary of Geranium Day, in aid of the Greater London Fund for the Blind, has been celebrated in fitting manner by a collection in the Metropolitan and City Police areas amounting to £21,940, which exceeds the previous year's total by £3,420. Owing to petrol restrictions, the usual tours of the depots were not made, and Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse was much missed by the sellers accustomed to greet him on his usual progress to the Mansion House. Fewer sellers worked harder than ever on one of the early days of double summer time characterised by an exceptional gale of bitter wind, and particular thanks are due to those who had already turned out for one big Flag Day beforehand and were expecting to do the same the following week for still another.

"Big-hearted Arthur" Askey had made a special appeal, but was obliged to do his own

selling "on the set." His specially written ditty, in leaflet form, was distributed at the 21st Birthday Party at Grosvenor House in March and doubtless helped to keep the day in remembrance. This party, held instead of the usual reception, was given by the Joint Committee (Greater London Fund, Sunshine Homes and Servers of the Blind League), and was attended by many of the Mayors and Mayoresses of the various Boroughs, Chairmen of Council with their ladies and leading organisers. Films took the place of speeches—"Sightseeing with Seymour Hicks," "Out of the Night" and "Conquest," compèred by Leslie Howard, told an eloquent tale of the life and courage of the blind in peace and war, inspiring those who saw them to collect more than the £21,000, which was the 21st Birthday Target. There was an entertainment by Harry Hudson and Gloria Kane, and dancing by pupils of the Euphan MacLaren and Maude Wells Schools, representing all the children who give so lovingly of their service to other children who are blind, concluding with a specially designed finale—"A Happy 21st Birthday to Geranium Day"—a wish which has been amply fulfilled.

Blinded Civilians as Government Telephonists.

—Twelve civilians who lost their sight in air raids and were subsequently trained as telephonists by the National Institute for the Blind have been given jobs on Government switchboards.

Lord Mayor Entertains St. Dunstaners.—Sir Samuel and Lady Joseph, Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress of London, entertained a hundred war-blinded men and women to luncheon at the Mansion House on April 7th. Preceded by the Mace and the Sword of State, the Lord Mayor entered, accompanied by a young woman munition worker, blinded in an explosion. Behind him the Lady Mayoress walked with an officer who lost his sight in the Middle East, and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands also honoured the luncheon with his presence. During the proceedings Prince Bernhard made a point of speaking to a member of the Dutch Forces blinded in action. An American, two Poles, a Canadian and a member of the Fighting French Forces were among the blind guests, and others included a corporal of the A.T.S. and members of Civil Defence Services.

Sir Ian Fraser, M.P., Chairman of St. Dunstan's, spoke, and said that about one-third of the casualties treated in St. Dunstan's Hospital had recovered some useful vision. More than 30 blinded men were prisoners of war. Other speakers at the luncheon in-

cluded the Lord Mayor and Sir Walter Womersley, Minister of Pensions. The B.B.C. provided an entertainment.

Blind Children at Confirmation.—It is of interest to note that in preparing several of the blind children at Court Grange School for confirmation, the Chaplain, the Rev. S. E. Bassett Pike, found them more responsive and interested than normal children.

Birmingham Royal Institution.—The Board of Management of the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind has, we understand, proposed to adopt Lickey Grange, near Bromsgrove, as a school for the blind, and to erect further hostels.

A Punch-Ball with a Noise.—A blinded soldier of the 8th Army, now convalescent in England, wanted "a punch-ball he could hear"—a ball with a gong-attachment which would register the rhythmic beat of the ball as he hammered it. N.A.A.F.I.'s sports supervisor designed the "sound ball" at once.

It has already been delivered, and the blinded soldier pounds it daily, listening to his punches gathering speed as the ball "dongs" against a special metal plate.

Eye Exercises.—An ophthalmic surgeon, in a letter to *The Times*, commenting on "The Art of Seeing," by Aldous Huxley, reviewed in the March issue of *THE NEW BEACON*, says: "Failing eyesight associated with headaches and other symptoms may be due to many causes, among which the minor but very troublesome ones such as general or nervous fatigue, poor working conditions of ventilation and

illumination, unsuitability of the work itself, unfortunate home conditions, and uncorrected optical errors in the visual organ itself, which may or may not need the aid of spectacles, are intermingled with conditions of extreme urgency such as kidney disease, diabetes, brain tumour, glaucoma and cataract. The practitioners of the Bates and other methods of eye exercises cannot possibly, from the nature of their wholly inadequate training, know what they are treating, and virtually the same ritual is applied to each sufferer who comes to them for what he may think is eye strain or some trivial defect of vision."

The writer goes on to say that if anyone feels that he would like to try eye exercises, he should only do so after a full discussion on their possible value with his doctor or an ophthalmic specialist.

A Simple Adaptation of Scales for the Blind.—A blind man recently complained that he was unable to weigh his own letters and that the National Institute for the Blind only kept a German model of a letter scale which, obviously could not be obtained.

The need was promptly met by the Institute in a very simple method. An ordinary pair of letter scales was bought for 19s. 9d. and was adapted at a cost of 1s. Additional holes were drilled in the wooden base of the scales so that each weight was separate instead of being in piles. Small brass tacks were then driven into the base, so that against the 1, 2, 4 and 8 oz. weights there is a dot corresponding to the same figures on a Braille watch.

The complainant is now happy.

FOREIGN NEWS

Moukden Blind Girls' Home Becomes Danish.—Word comes that the St. Nicholas Blind Girls' Home at Moukden, Manchuria, which houses some 60 blind girls, is now registered as a Danish institution instead of a British one. This precaution was taken to prevent school funds in the Moukden bank being frozen, and the Home is now under the wing of the Danish Lutheran Mission, the Scottish principal, Miss Black, having left for repatriation. A large stock of wool having been received from this country in 1941, and released from the Japanese Customs after much negotiation, the girls have been able to carry on with the knitting for which they seem to have made quite a name for themselves. The excellence of their knitting and the cheerfulness of their presence struck all their visitors and has even impressed the Japanese.

A Glimpse of the Chinese Blind.—A note recently appeared in *The Life of Faith*, written by a worker for the China Inland Mission, who had come into contact with a blind girl living in the local workhouse of a Honan town. She was a convert to Christianity and had been left a widow at the age of about fifteen. Fortune-telling is the only vocation open to the untrained blind in China, "and they walk round the streets tapping with a sort of clapper they hold in their hands, calling for clients." So far, the blind girl referred to had refused to do this, for she feels that it is contrary to her Christian faith, and the missionary is hoping that an alternative may be offered, as the Chinese pastor in the town is interested in the blind and is hoping to open a school where they may learn to read and to make baskets.

RECENT STATISTICS—II

By BEN PURSE

It is generally understood that the facts and figures published in the census returns in so far as they related to the blind, prior to the Ministry of Health being responsible for the keeping of a central register, were in many important respects quite unreliable. Nevertheless, it is of interest to look at the population figures from the time that the first recorded schedules were made, that is, the year 1851. The blind population at that date was said to number 18,306 out of a total population of 27,533,755. Ten years later the blind numbered 19,352 out of a total population of 29,070,932. The relevant figures in the succeeding census returns were as follows :

Year	Blind Population	General Population
1871	21,590	31,629,299
1881	22,832	35,026,108
1891	23,467	37,880,764
1901	25,317	41,609,091
1911	26,336	45,370,530

We have no complete record of the occupations practised by the blind prior to 1891, and it is obvious from the enumeration of the pursuits that the information given cannot be regarded as in any sense authoritative. Attached to one somewhat elaborate table for the year 1901 the following statement appears: "222 males and 106 females were on the day of enumeration resident in workhouses," and "Where the occupation is inconsistent with the infirmity it may generally be assumed that the former occupation of the afflicted person has been returned, or that he is an employer." This affords a general explanation of the manner in which the records were made, and it cannot be emphasised too much that the enumerations were unsatisfactory.

In 1891 the number of employed blind persons was said to be 5,640, the classification being as follows :

Males—

Church, Scripture readers, ministers	..	80
School teachers	.. ..	48
Music	.. ..	531
Brokers and agents	.. ..	11
Farmers	.. ..	142
Agricultural labourers	.. ..	186
Instrument makers and piano tuners	..	107
Basket-makers	.. ..	839
Brush-makers	.. ..	172
Newspaper agents	.. ..	80
Mat-makers	.. ..	140

Grocers and tea-dealers	.. ..	143
Street sellers	.. ..	230
Labourers	.. ..	277
All other occupations	.. ..	1,643

Females—

School teachers	.. ..	41
Music	.. ..	57
Domestic servants, charwomen and laundresses	.. ..	238
Basket-makers	.. ..	135
Brush-makers	.. ..	56
Hosiery makers	.. ..	10
Fancy goods	.. ..	136
Street sellers	.. ..	52
All other occupations	.. ..	286

In 1901 the records show a total of 5,676 blind persons, employed as follows :

Males—

Church, Scripture readers	.. ..	66
School teachers	.. ..	47
Music	.. ..	614
Brokers and agents	.. ..	179
Farmers	.. ..	142
Agricultural labourers	.. ..	70
Instrument makers and piano tuners	..	208
Basket-makers	.. ..	936
Brush-makers	.. ..	158
Newspaper agents	.. ..	106
Mat-makers	.. ..	157
Grocers and tea-dealers	.. ..	153
Street sellers	.. ..	268
Labourers	.. ..	123
All others	.. ..	1,420

Females—

School teachers	.. ..	53
Music	.. ..	69
Domestic workers	.. ..	173
Basket-makers	.. ..	184
Brush-makers	.. ..	66
Hosiery makers	.. ..	43
Fancy goods	.. ..	101
Street sellers	.. ..	28
All others	.. ..	312

The returns for 1911 give a total of 5,526 blind persons, employed as follows :

Males—

Church	.. ..	59
School	.. ..	41
Music	.. ..	438
Agents and brokers	.. ..	209
Farmers	.. ..	126
Agricultural labourers	.. ..	45
Instrument makers and piano tuners	..	269
Baskets	.. ..	875
Brushes	.. ..	156
Coal dealers	.. ..	41
Mats	.. ..	186
Boot repairers	.. ..	59
Grocers and tea-dealers	.. ..	160
General dealers	.. ..	59
Street sellers	.. ..	287
Labourers	.. ..	94
All others	.. ..	1,284

Females—

School	62
Music	63
Domestic workers	88
Brokers and agents	49
Baskets	224
Brooms	67
Hosiery	138
Fancy goods	53
Lodging keepers	35
Street sellers	41
All others	318

It is obvious, however, that these returns were neither complete nor accurate, and it is only when we come to consider the facts revealed in the central register from 1921 onwards that we are enabled in any real sense to make a proper appreciation of the progress that has been achieved. There are many reasons accounting for the deficiencies that are to be found in the old census returns. There was no particular inducement for the head of a household to record the fact that a member of that household was physically defective. The income of the family was not increased by grants either from the Exchequer or from local authorities, and the voluntary pensions on the whole did not substantially increase the family income. Though such pensions were useful, they were not so large as to constitute an inducement for making a special declaration to the enumerator.

Better registration, as effected by the various institutions, societies and agencies for the blind,

has been assisted by the fact that in necessitous cases a knowledge of social conditions has enabled the competent authorities to provide material help wherever such is needed, and in making returns there is no longer any reason for withholding information required for the purpose of building up a reliable central register.

Apart from these considerations, the vigilance of county and county borough organisations has brought to light many things which the ordinary census returns could never have revealed, and thus it has been possible to present a tolerably complete record which enables us to make deductions and calculations which otherwise would not have been available. Every county and county borough authority can say within reasonable limits what is the position of every blind person within their respective areas, also the total numbers, whether they are employed, unemployed or training for employment, whether they have independent means, or to what extent they are dependent upon assistance being provided from sources outside their immediate household. These considerations are obviously most important and enable us to say with some degree of certainty that no case of real merit is being overlooked, whilst, at the same time, we are able to make plans for the future, such as will be capable of remedying any known deficiencies or defects.

(To be continued)

WE LIVE AGAIN—III.

By F. BURVILLE

THE autumn and winter of 1940-41 brought to most people of these islands added trials, anxieties and responsibilities, yet I think we shall all agree that out of our afflictions a comradeship was born, the like of which had not been witnessed in living memory.

As a prelude to this article, I beg leave to relate in brief one or two episodes which were typical of the good fellowship I encountered when travelling to and from work during those days which followed the nights of incessant bombing from the air.

The Underground train was crowded to overflowing. The greater part of a thousand souls were being transported from the suburbs to London. We had reached the second station when the order was given "All change." This meant that the line had been damaged ahead and we should have to transfer to buses. In a matter of minutes the whole train load of tired people alighted and boarded a fleet of buses

and were being carried one station farther on where a train stood in readiness to continue the journey towards London. Still another change of trains was ordered, and a further transfer to a fleet of buses. In all this the only raised voices that I heard were those of the officials issuing instructions, and the passengers of my coach arranging for the safe conduct of the passenger who had no sight. On my homeward journey in the late afternoon of the same day I was obliged to catch my train five stations up the line. As I stood in the lift, being whisked down into the earth, a big soft body pressed against me several times. With the opening of the gates the sound of many excited voices reached me, and I knew that hundreds of women and children were taking refuge from the bombing. I had become curious to learn what object it was which continued to bump against me and had raised my hand to inspect it when a child's voice issued from beneath the mass, saying:

"I'll see yer darn to the platform, guv'nor, in case yer falls over these kids and their beds." A fellow traveller saved him the effort and explained that my would-be little friend was but a kid himself, carrying the family bedding on his head!

I have indulged in this preamble hoping thereby to capture the imagination of the reader, so that we might re-live together some further incidents which took place between myself and members of the British public who were blinded by enemy action.

In July, 1941, I left London to take up duties at one of the National Institute's Homes of Recovery for War-Blinded Civilians. It is more than possible that the reader has seen the illustrated folder published by the Institute which gives, in fairly broad outlines, the aims and purposes of the Homes of Recovery. Therefore, I will not take up time and space in an attempt to amplify what has already been written by way of introduction, except to say that the Home of Recovery in which I worked was very well appointed, and nothing that human thought could devise for the well-being of the patients was lacking.

The first few weeks after arrival the guests spent in convalescence and becoming familiar with the house and surroundings. By the end of September the patients had more or less settled down to serious studies in an endeavour to readjust their lives to the new world in which they now found themselves. We were a pretty mixed assembly, having come together from various spheres of the industrial world; our tastes and aspirations differed quite a bit. There were those who desired to become proficient braillists, touch typists or telephonists, with a view to obtaining employment at the earliest possible opportunity, and others who were passionately desirous of being able to fulfil the functions of mother and wife in their families once again.

The reader will readily realise that our people were suffering from more than a sudden blindness. Loss of vision was in every case accompanied by severe shock, and, in some cases, multiple injuries. Nevertheless, it can be said with truth that the classes for study were well and regularly attended. Our practice was to teach the people in groups, with individual tuition where the circumstances demanded. Our working day began as soon as the nursing staff had made the patients comfortable. The hour fixed was 9.30 a.m., and work finished at 6.30 p.m. A regular system of "breaks" was arranged by the Matron, during which patients were taken for walks or otherwise entertained.

I remember on one occasion —when I was teaching Braille to a group of five beginners—being confronted with the question: "Can you give me a word which contains six contractions?" This question came from a man who had not only lost his sight and hearing, but was suffering from other bodily injuries. Before I had time to collect my wits he vouchsafed the answer, "Disinterestedness, and it took me half the night to discover it!" Another healthy sign of recovery showed itself before we were half way through with our Braille studies when our pupils would come to class, offer the teacher brilliant overnight discoveries for improving the compilation of the accepted Braille system, and each would vie with the other to impress the teacher with the merits of the respective methods suggested. The teacher, of course, fully appreciated the value of constructive discussion arising from these well thought-out suggestions, and used the circumstance to broaden the outlook of the students and erase from their minds what appeared to be anomalies in the Braille system.

Not everyone of our patients came to us mentally alert. A typical case of this kind was the middle-aged woman who had spent all her life in domestic service. She was now totally blind and was suffering so badly from shock that she could scarcely tell her left hand from her right. "What had the Home of Recovery to offer her?" was the question that consumed her night and day. All she asked of life was to be given the power to clean and manage a little flat of her own. This woman eventually made good, but before she was able to make a bed, peel a potato and perform other household duties, she received intensive training in the work-room, where she learned to construct light basketry out of centre-cane and willows. For many weeks this valiant soul struggled with her infirmities, yet little visible progress was made. Nevertheless, she continued to try to develop that sense of judgment which she knew to be so essential for her ultimate happiness. Individual courage and implicit faith in those who were training her eventually pulled her through. She could at length judge for certainty, shape, form and symmetry. We agreed that it did not matter in the slightest if she never made another basket; the all-important thing was that she had learned to use her hands and brain intelligently. This courageous woman later received domestic training at the National Institute's specially appointed bungalow, and when I last saw her, she was assisting happily in preparing a meal for other visitors.

One of the brightest and happiest of our guests was a young woman with her baby girl. It was a great day for the Matron and all concerned when the blind mother had learned to do everything that a mother needs to do for a child, including clothes mending and the ability to spring clean her own room at the Home. She was remarkably clever with her fingers. She actually constructed a dog kennel out of light willows; it was shaped like a cottage, with gables and chimney-stack, and had a hinged lattice door.

In the following June, less than nine months after our first arrivals had settled down, we held our second display day. Members of the general public, who were invited to view the Home and the work that was being done by the patients, found it hard to believe their own eyes. They saw men and women operating the telephone switch-board and taking down messages, etc., in Braille shorthand, or taking down business letters in shorthand and typing them back into longhand. The sale of work demonstrated the excellence of the articles that had been made by those who were not suited for other training.

It was feared that there would be a shortage of certain lines of articles for the sale. Volunteers were called for to make a last-minute effort. Telephonists, typists and teachers answered the call up to 90 per cent. of the total personnel. Home Teachers will be interested to know that amongst the goods displayed were knitted goods, all done by hand; shopping bags in canvas with floral designs; round, oval and rectangular shopping baskets; sea-grass stools; stools made in willow, with coloured tray bases worked in for the stool or table top; tea trays in various shapes; oval and square clothes baskets; round soiled-linen baskets; knitting baskets; needlework baskets of many designs; babies' rattles, besides a dozen other classes of work.

Visitors were encouraged to mix freely with our blind people, which they did, sharing tables with them when tea-time came round, and it is on this happy note that I will bring this article to a close. May the National Institute ever keep this splendid and high standard of Training Home open to our civilian blind.

(To be continued)

THE ELDERLY BLIND: WHAT CAN THEY DO?

By A. E. BAWTREE, F.R.P.S.

II. Marking a Badminton Court; Making a Bonfire

WHENEVER a lawn is large enough it is usually used for some kind of game, from clock golf up to lawn tennis. On my own lawn a medium sized game must be played, namely, Badminton. Now, marking out the court for this game takes time and trouble, and the young people are very glad to be quit of it, particularly now that times for play are limited, mere hours off from war duties of one kind or another. I am therefore really doing a helpful piece of work in undertaking the marking out. It is not, however, negligible, because, as heavy rain obliterates the lines, the marking has to be done several times in the season.

I give particulars for one size and design of court upon a lawn of known dimensions, but there will be little difficulty in modifying dimensions and lay-out to suit the game to be played and area of grass available. My own lawn measures 66 feet from east to west and 21 feet from north to south. The court measures 40 feet by 20. At each end is a service court 20 feet by 3. Then there are two courts side by side, each 12 feet long by 10 feet wide. Finally, there is the centre court, 20 feet wide by 10 feet from

east to west. The net is placed along the centre of this court, with a space of 5 feet on each side of it.

The requisites for marking out are about a dozen and a half iron meat skewers or similarly shaped pieces of stout wire. Wooden sticks are not recommended, as, if one is trodden on, it breaks off, and the spot marked is lost. Three lengths of string are required. The main string has a loop at one end and knots at distances of 5, 17 and 20, and 33 feet from the loop. The string is about 35 feet long overall. The cross string has a loop at one end, a knot 10 feet from the loop, and a total length of 22 feet. The marking string is like the cross string, but without the knot in it. A piece of board 2 feet long by 6 inches wide is required. Strips of thin wood or cardboard are tacked round this to form a tray half-an-inch deep. A nail is driven into the board near each end of one side and 2 inches from the side. They stand up half-an-inch above the rim of the tray. Then a squat form of pot, which will not easily turn over, is filled with whitening and water, mixed to the consistency of cream, and, finally, a 2 inch wide flat paint brush must be provided.

In the north-west corner of the lawn, and a few inches from the long north side, a skewer is inserted in the ground. These skewers will be referred to as "pegs." The main string is tied to this at the 33 foot knot. The string is stretched taut and one net pole is driven into the ground through the loop in the end of the string. Pegs are inserted at the 5 foot, 17 foot and 20 foot knots. The peg in the north-west corner bearing the string is swung round to the north-east corner, and the positions of the knots are pegged down. Then the whole operation is repeated on the south side of the lawn. The corner peg is now put away. I cross to the north-west corner peg of the course, i.e., on the 20 foot knot spot. I tie the string round my body so that it is just taut. It will be found that, when rising after kneeling, one has lost all sense of direction, but a pull upon the string fixed in the centre of the south side will restore this.

Pass the loop in the marker string over the northern net post and tie the other end to the north-west 20 foot knot. Place the board with its left-hand corner against this peg and its edge just touching the string. Insert a peg a couple of inches away from the right-hand corner of the board and behind the string. Lift the string over and behind the two nails in order that it shall not be coated with whitening. Then, using the edge of the board as a ruler, paint a 2-inch wide strip of the length of the board. Release the string. Move the board till its left-hand corner is opposite the peg at the back and insert a similar peg behind the right-hand corner of the board. Hitch back the string and paint the second 2 feet. Remove the peg opposite the left-hand corner of the board, and proceed in a similar manner till the net post is reached. Repeat the marking out operation on each of the other three sides of the court.

Remove the marker string from the post and slip it over the north-west 20-foot knot. Carry the string across and tie it to the south-west 20-foot peg. Paint in the line running along the string. Loop the cross string over one 17-foot peg and tie it to the opposite one. Insert a peg at the knot in its centre. Remove the string and replace it by the marker string and paint in the line. Loop the marker string over the peg in the centre of the line. Fasten the cross string between the two 5-foot pegs. Insert a peg at the knot in its centre. Fix the other end of the marker string to this peg and paint in the line along the string. Replace the cross string by the marker string and paint in the line between the 5-foot pegs. One half of the court will now be complete, and the other half is set out in the same manner.

As each peg is used for the last time it should be pulled up, so that there is no need to go over the wet course collecting these pegs.

* * *

It is not safe for a blind man to make a bonfire in the ground, as one may trip into it, but if an incinerator is used pleasurable and useful work can be done in disposing of garden refuse. The incinerator is simply the outer jacket of a disused gas copper, and one can often be obtained from the local gas company. The burner is removed and a bottom of interlaced cross wires is put in through holes pierced round the lower edge of the cylinder, which stands upon three or four short feet. The refuse should be allowed to dry well before being burnt. It will do this better in the incinerator than on the ground. The fire should be lighted early in the day, and no more fuel should be put on towards evening in case the flames should burst forth after black-out time. On no account should the fire be quenched with water. The ashes are a valuable manure, containing potash, if kept dry, but wet destroys all their virtue. If you collect the refuse in a wheelbarrow, always pull it and don't push it; you can guide it better that way. A string may be temporarily fixed a yard from the ground along the border from which refuse is being removed. A clothes peg is fixed upon this at the point where the filled barrow is wheeled away. By this means the point at which to recommence operations is readily found.

(To be continued)

THE WAR BLINDED

ACCORDING to the latest available figures, the total number of British men, women and children who have lost their sight as a result of enemy action, whether as civilians or as members of the Services, is approximately 310, comprising 200 members of the Services and 110 civilians.

Of the 200 blinded members of the Services, 100 are in training or have been trained at St. Dunstan's in England, and 30 are prisoners of war.

Of the 110 blinded civilians, 58 have received or are receiving training at one of the National Institute's Homes of Recovery (three proceeding to the Institute's School of Massage), two children have been at the Institute's Sunshine Homes, one girl went to Chorleywood College, and one man went direct to the Massage School.

SAVING SIGHT

IT is a welcome sign of confidence in the future and of determination to protect the health of the people in the post-war world that progress in prevention of blindness is now being resumed. What has been left undone must now be planned for and achieved.

Most voluntary agencies for the blind include prevention of blindness among their objects, and Local Authorities, in addition to specific powers or duties such as those relating to Ophthalmia Neonatorum, have wide powers to assist preventive work in general. The objects, however, have not been vigorously pursued and the powers have not been adequately used. The Union of Counties' Prevention of Blindness Committee did valuable work in indicating what should be done. Its results in terms of positive action were disappointing and time was lost before the war by failure to carry out in full the recommendations made by it, which would have led to more accurate ascertainment of the causes of the blindness of all persons newly added to the register.

There is now evident impatience to get on with the job. The Royal Eye Hospital in London has made an arrangement with the Royal College of Surgeons to found a Research Chair in Ophthalmology. The University of Oxford has made an even more important move in announcing its intention to establish a Department of Ophthalmology as a further step in the development of what, thanks to the initial generosity of Lord Nuffield, promises to be the most important centre of medical research in Europe, the Oxford Medical School. Other proposals are in the air, and the National Institute for the Blind, which mooted the need for further research into the causes of blindness before the establishment of the Union's Committee, has obviously taken the right step in reconstituting its Prevention of Blindness Committee on a broader basis and in deciding to support both the London Chair and the Oxford Department.

At the April meeting of the National Institute's Council, Sir Beachcroft Towse, the Chairman, made a statement which has aroused considerable attention. He said that in his view the most important work the Institute could undertake was to reduce the number of blind people. "There are far too many blind people in the country," he said. "Many of them need never have lost their sight. It seems foolish for the country to be spending millions a year on the care of the blind and practically nothing on the saving of sight." Research into every cause of blindness was greatly needed and he hoped that the Council would endorse the proposals being made to it by the Prevention of Blindness Committee. That endorsement was given unanimously; all Groups represented on the Council—Regional Bodies, Local Authorities, Other Agencies for the Blind, Organisations of Blind Persons and the National Group—were in complete accord. So far as those connected with Blind Welfare are concerned, the new move for prevention of blindness has been well and truly launched.

It is an astonishing thing that for so many years of social progress there has been no Centre of Ophthalmological Research in England and Wales. The Tennant Institute of the University of Glasgow has been unique in Great Britain. The equipment of the nation in this fundamental matter has been grossly inadequate. Without scientific research, knowledge in any branch of medicine must fail. Practising ophthalmologists in this country have not had the backing they require or the opportunities they deserve. In their professional zeal, they have turned envious eyes on the Wilmer Institute in the U.S.A. and on the opportunities of intensive experience created for some of their colleagues on the Continent of Europe. As even a layman knows that the cause of glaucoma is unknown, that disease may be used to illustrate one important aspect of ophthalmological research, namely, that it needs to be carried on with research in other branches of medicine. The Oxford Department of Ophthalmology working side by side with other Departments, *e.g.*, in Biochemistry and Physiology, already established, promises achievements of immense importance, and, though the scientific approach to research rigorously guards itself against exaggerated expectations, there can be no doubt that Sir Beachcroft Towse's call for a reduction in the number of the blind can be answered by a development of research facilities on a scale commensurate with the problem which blindness effects.

Blind Welfare costs the community something like £5,000,000 a year. Of that amount, sundry Government Departments are responsible for nearly £2,000,000, and the Local Authorities under the Blind Persons Act, for a little over £2,000,000. Research work must be a free activity of scientific

workers. On the other hand, all medical research work must have some relation to the comprehensive organisation of national health. Ophthalmological research should, at the same time, be geared closely into Blind Welfare and, if the Ministry of Health, the Local Authorities and the Voluntary Agencies can work together, not to control the scientists, but to organise opportunities on their behalf and to ensure the application of the results of their investigations, we should achieve in the matter of prevention results comparable to those achieved in Blind Welfare and even more satisfactory in their fundamental significance.

THE EDITOR.

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION”

By W. H. COATES

V.—The Cult of the Normal

DURING his schooldays Tom had seen how often muscular eccentricities arise among blind children. Cases of head-wagging, body-rocking, bad posture, etc., provided an obvious starting point for the doctrine of the supreme importance of normality. Teachers and older pupils set their faces inexorably against any behaviour that could be called specifically “blind.” It was the duty of everyone, always and everywhere, to appear as much like a seeing person as he could. The highest praise of a blind person’s appearance, conduct and conversation was that “you wouldn’t know he was blind.” It was the necessary and wholesome corrective to the effects of segregation.

In time Tom, now a serious student of music, attained to membership of an ancient university. There he found that he would have to push the cult of the normal to greater lengths than were ever dreamed of at school. Conformity to one of a few ruling types was demanded before you could be accepted as an equal and a companion. You must dress in a certain way, talk in a certain way upon a given list of subjects, do certain things and not do certain other things. It was like a rather exclusive club. However excellent a man’s intellectual powers might be, they were actually a disadvantage to him if he had not also the social complexion required by the club.

Blindness was a disqualification, though not an absolute one. It was the badge of an alien life. It implied uncommon experiences. Its bearer was something of a novelty—a mystery—to those shy, callow youths into whose midst he had suddenly been thrown.

One day one of the bolder of them said to Tom: “Do you know, Thomas, I passed your window last night and heard you typing, and there was no light on; and it gave me quite a queer feeling. It seemed uncanny to hear you tapping away in the dark like that.”

Tom laughed. “Why on earth should I put the light on?” he said. “It doesn’t help me in the least. It would be as irrational as it would for you to carry a pebble in your pocket every time you went to tennis.”

“I know. But feelings don’t always accord with reason. You would do it for the sake of appearances, and we all do twenty things a day on that score.”

“And the weirder one is in the eyes of others,” Tom said, “the more careful one must be not to estrange them further. Believe me, Stevens, everything a blind man does in public, or does not do, is somehow attributed to his being blind. If I stole your watch they would say that blindness induced kleptomania. That’s how they avoid holding us responsible for our misbehaviour.”

That conversation gave Tom an inkling of the kind of notoriety which awaited any blind man who neglected the least of common usages. Already something of a foreigner, he would become in addition a thing to make the flesh creep. If he wanted to order his life rationally by his condition, and adjust it to answer to his needs, then he must be content to widen the gulf between himself and the rest of the community.

But for most of us the supreme need is the closest possible association with the community. To this end we are ready to sacrifice reason and honesty in our lives, and to constrict them within the bonds of “normality.” To this end we will pretend, *ad infinitum*, forging our days as a concatenation of “white lies.”

The blind man who craved for social advancement needed self-confidence. He had to take the initiative in breaking down the barriers and demonstrating to those on the other side that he was as like them as one rugger-ball is to another. He must be active but not aggressive; resolute but not ostentatious; tactful, forceful, and quick-witted.

Tom found it trying to talk at length about

things that were unknown to him, or grow warm about spectacles for which he would not give a button. He tried to talk about hockey as though he had played and watched it all his life. He discoursed on architecture. He discussed designs for club ties and tints for trousers. Part of the time he did not know whether he was talking sense or nonsense; all the time he felt uncomfortably that his hearers must perceive the bookishness of his knowledge and the baselessness of his sentiments.

After the worse of these orgies of humbug, he felt that the success of the farce did not justify the expense of its production. What real value could there be in the sort of social life that entailed it? Did that life give anything solid

in exchange for having your integrity undermined, your interests warped, your activities curtailed, your individuality ruined? His mind was fully of secondhand junk.

At other times he felt he was making a fuss about nothing. The life was superficial, certainly, yet it was warm and gay and flattering, and its breezes blew him out of the doldrums of introspection into the brisk, irresponsible airs of lighthearted companionship. There was a tang in that atmosphere—a blend of sharp and sweet which refreshed and retuned the mind.

Between these viewpoints Tom oscillated continually, and failed to establish himself permanently at either.

(To be continued.)

PEDESTRIANS

A Blind Woman's Plea

WHEN I was a little girl my father told me about the first big tractor which approached our village. The blacksmith, who had eleven children to support, was, naturally, the first to see the red light.

Headed by him, the labourers of the parish, having armed themselves with crowbars and sledgehammers, sallied forth to meet it. That fine engine and its tackle were left, a heap of wreckage, by the roadside. But this did not stop the dreaded innovation, for not long afterwards a tractor dépôt was opened in the next parish.

Despite the red-flag man, small boys would not be kept away when its fascinating monsters came snorting and jangling through our erstwhile peaceful street. Upon one day a little fellow tumbled down and was crushed by a broad wheel. The next day, partly as a solemn warning, doubtless, my mother sent my sister and me down to his home with some flowers and a message of sympathy. It was such a sunny day. The bees were humming. It did seem a pity that Tommy was dead. Very quietly his mother took us up to the spotless bedroom where he lay. She could not shed any tears or speak above a whisper, but now and then just caught her breath in a dry sob. Tommy was her only child, and had come to her rather late in life. After he was gone she never smiled again.

Since science brought forth the fetish of to-day, called the internal combustion engine, the red-flag man had to find a new occupation and think of saving his own skin incidentally. Thousands of express engines rush along our roads, the lives of pedestrians and their children being regarded as of secondary importance to

speed. Children are told to think of safety first, but where can they find it? For most people the joy of walking is gone, because there is no safe or quiet place left near their home to walk in.

During over thirty years all sorts of improvements have been made in the "unfair" way for motors to move more easily, but few subways or bridges have yet appeared for pedestrians; in fact, it is quite unusual to give them a few consecutive yards of pavement worthy that name. Bits and scraps have to suffice. Even the newest pavements are crossed at every gateway by dangerous, horrible depressions, down and up which babies have to be jolted in their prams by patient mothers. Before a man is allowed to design, or make paths, it would be a very good thing if he were compelled to push a pram on a market day, and do the family shopping. Of course, his own progeny should occupy the pram; twins would enhance the value of this enlightening test. Although wide, rough strips of grass flank the roads, no paths exist at all between villages, and there is ample space for both paths and lines of trees the country needs so badly. People have to wait, shivering in the wind and rain, for the bus, there being no shelters provided, even in towns. Here, again, I would suggest that trees and shrubs could be utilised in many places to save expense and also beautify them. What a boon these things would be! In our post-war world we do not want a continuation of to-day's miseries, but just ask for common consideration for all. If that happened the dole would go right out of fashion!

ANNIE THORNTON.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Traumatic Ulcer of the Cornea, with Special Reference to Coal Miners.

An article bearing this title, and written by Colonel R. M. Dickson, Director of the W. H. Ross (Foundation) Scotland for the Study of Prevention of Blindness, appeared in the December issue of the *British Journal of Ophthalmology*.

Edinburgh is the hospital centre for miners employed in the collieries of Fife and the Lothians, and the frequent occurrence of traumatic ulcer of the cornea in the eye wards of the Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh, decided the trustees of the Ross Foundation to select this subject for its first investigation into industrial eye injuries. The number of beds in the Eye Department is 54, and during 1939-40, 112 patients were admitted for treatment of corneal ulcer. Any preventive measures that would reduce the number of persons admitted for this cause, and any treatment that would shorten the stay of those who had to be accepted as in-patients would, therefore, be of real service.

Accordingly, a clinical and bacteriological examination was begun in 1938 of every case of ulcer of the cornea in the Infirmary, and between that year and March, 1941, 350 cases were examined, of whom 234, or 66.8 per cent., were miners. An investigation on similar lines carried out at the Glasgow Eye Infirmary showed that of 87 cases, 31 per cent. were miners (the next higher percentage in Glasgow being engineers, of whom the percentage was 17.2). In Edinburgh the average stay in hospital was 16.3 days and in Glasgow 19 days.

It was found by experiment that the eye drops No. 1 used in the first aid treatment of eye injuries in accordance with the instructions of the Factory Department of the Home Office were not adequate as a protection against corneal ulcer, and the Ross Foundation therefore carried out a special investigation, which showed that Albucid Soluble (Sodium Sulphacetamide) was far more effective than any previous form of treatment. In December, 1941, the sanction of the Mines Department was obtained for the experimental use of Albucid Soluble in the First Aid room of factories. During the six months ending June, 1942, 646 of 23,500 men employed in collieries were treated in this way, and of those treated over 96 per cent. lost no working

time at all. In hospital treatment the method of application of Albucid Soluble is still in an experimental stage, but the results appear promising.

Booklets on the Deaf-Blind

Two booklets have recently been added to the rather scanty supply of literature on the subject of the deaf-blind. One is *The Care of the Deaf-Blind*, and consists of four prize-winning essays in the Macgregor Prize Competition for 1942. Copies are obtainable from the Hon. Registrar of the College of Teachers, Dorton House, Dorton, near Aylesbury, price 1s. 3d. The College is to be congratulated upon deciding to print these very practical essays, two of them written by teachers of the deaf and two by home teachers of the blind. How pleased Mr. Tate would have been with them, and how he would have appreciated the sympathy and understanding that informs them!

Stretch Forth Thine Hand again has the double handicap as its theme, but the writer, Geraldine Lawhorn, of Illinois, approaches it from within; for she lost her own sight and hearing in childhood. The pamphlet is really a fragment of autobiography, written with humour, gaiety (almost hilarity) and complete freedom from affectation. Miss Lawhorn plunges straight into her story with a warm tribute to the mother to whom she owes so much. "Mom," she writes, "was sixteen years old when she let go the ribbon reins of life and took up the hard leather reins that callouse palms and cut fingers. Her mother passed then, and Mom kept house for her step-father and two-year-old brother. . . . She was, and always would be, gentle, kind and patient."

Geraldine Lawhorn is still in the twenties, and, in spite of her handicap, she seems to have led a very normal life; as a pupil in the "Braille room" of a high school for the seeing, as the winner of a short story prize contest, as secretary of a social club for the blind, as an actor in amateur dramatics, as (on more than one occasion) a speaker over the radio, and as the enthusiastic owner of a guide-dog. No part of *Stretch Forth Thine Hand* is more attractive than her account of her dog, Blondie von la Salle, "white with golden ears, and speaks five languages." Two sentences from the book seem to sum up the story of Geraldine Lawhorn's happiness in a few words: "I've always been fortunate in having good teachers, friends and relatives," and "God is love, and love can penetrate anything."

PERSONALIA

HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY and HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK have both accepted the invitation of Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., Chairman of the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind, to become Vice-Presidents of the Institute.

* * *

New members of the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind appointed at the meeting of the Council held on April 8th were as follows:—

Group A.—Representatives of Regional Bodies.—MRS. MARY HENNESSY (Bristol), a representative of the Western Counties Association for the Blind, in place of Mr. F. Berriman, who is unable to serve.

Group E.—National Members.—MRS. ROBERT EICHHOLZ (London), in place of the late Mrs. John Knapp.

* * *

After many years of excellent service, MR. BERNARD LEVY, Craft Instructor in the Basket Department of Henshaw's Institution for the Blind, has decided to retire from active service. Mr. Levy came to this school as an elementary scholar early in 1896. He finally completed his training as a basketmaker in February, 1911. His work and his character were so outstanding as a trainee that immediately on being "passed out" as a pupil he was appointed as an Assistant Craft Instructor. It did not take him many years to be the Craft Instructor of the Basket Department of this Institution.

Mr. Levy has carried out his duties exceptionally well. He has always, in addition, been a Supervision Officer. The pupils have had a very high regard and affection for him, and all old pupils who have left Manchester always ask to see him immediately they enter the building. Fortunately for the Institution, however, he has decided to retain his position as Supervision Officer, so that the very popular figure about the building will not be missed.

In his retirement the Board of Management have lost an extremely loyal and efficient Craft Instructor.

* * *

MR. J. A. PETERKIN recently retired from his position as Home Teacher on the staff of the Sheffield Corporation, having attained the age

limit. He had completed 46 years' service in blind welfare: 23 years as a brushmaker and 23 years as a home teacher; of the latter period, 7 years were in the service of the Royal Sheffield Institution for the Blind and 16 years with the Sheffield Corporation.

The Town Clerk, in presenting a cheque from the staff of his Department to Mr. Peterkin, paid tribute to his long years of service as a home teacher, and stated that in spite of his own handicap of blindness, Mr. Peterkin had taken responsibility for one of the largest districts in the City and efficiently carried out the work without the aid of a guide.

Mr. Peterkin also received a cheque from the staff and workpeople of the Welfare of the Blind Department and a pair of military hair brushes (made by the blind) from the blind members of the handicraft classes.

* * *

MR. JOSEPH BOOTH, of Clowne, Derbyshire, has been elected Chairman of Clowne Rural Council, which gives him an *ex officio* seat on the Eckington Bench. Mr. Booth has been blind since 1919, and a member of the Clowne Rural Council for 15 years. For almost 10 years he has been Chairman of the Ratepayers and Property Owners Association, and he is one of the Trustees of the Clowne Council Charities.

* * *

MISS E. M. RIDLEY, now Supervisor of Teaching at the National Institute's Home of Recovery, Torquay, has just completed forty years' work for the blind. She went to Torquay in 1941, when the East London Home and School was closed owing to the war. She had been its Principal for many years, and had won the love of staff and pupils alike. She never spoke much in public of her work, but the School's Annual Reports told their own tale. Such Reports are often dismally dull reading, but these were different. "Father Christmas entered the hall in a sledge drawn by six of the elder boys, to an accompaniment of toy musical instruments." . . . "Miss Ridley . . . as usual, took the children to Hampton Court; the maze was as complicated and the fish as elusive to the human hand as ever." . . . "At the fair everyone could go on everything, as often as they liked." These things show that the atmosphere of the school was one in which normal energetic children found sympathy and understanding. A letter received recently from one of Miss Ridley's old pupils confirms the impression: "As one who is blind I know I speak for many hundreds of others when I say that I hope she may be able to continue her work for many

years to come. . . . Her personality shines and infects us with her cheerfulness. I know of no sighted person who understands us so thoroughly."

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

The Solace of Braille.

SIR,—The following extract is from a letter which I received recently from one of my seeing Braille pupils—a man suddenly deprived of his wife through death, and of the company of his two sons, now in the Services:

"The study of Braille has provided me with something requiring alternative lines of thought, and I am finding it something very real and permanent among all the uncertainty and anxiety now prevailing. It is not merely that it has been something to do in the black-out, but it appears to me as being likely to help to fill (as far as that is possible) the blankness that has come into my life."

I think this is a very fine tribute to Braille as a solace and help to educated men suddenly faced with domestic sorrow. There must be many persons who, if they knew that Braille could help to assuage personal sorrow by opening up a new vista of interest in life in service to the blind, would come forward, as Braille students, to become, eventually, voluntary Braille readers and writers.

Yours, etc.,

G. HOLME,
*Hon. Secretary, Fellowship House,
Holiday Home for the Deaf-Blind,
Hoylake, Cheshire.*

To the Editor.

Domiciliary Assistance.

SIR,—Variations in the form and amount of Domiciliary Assistance will no doubt continue until the Revised Scheme foreshadowed in the Beveridge Report has been agreed upon as between the Ministry of Social Security, the Local Authorities and the Voluntary Agencies. As stated therein, "the problem of blindness is profoundly affected by the general proposals of the Report."

The Voluntary Organisations in particular have had valuable experience of varying forms of administration of blind welfare services, and it should now be possible to pool that experience and produce a unified scheme likely to commend

itself to the proposed new Ministry and the Local Authorities. The scheme should now be in preparation. Our approach to the problem, however, must be from an entirely new angle, keeping in view conditions likely to result from the application of the Beveridge plan ten or twenty years hence.

Yours, etc.,

JOHN R. MACKENZIE,
*General Supt.,
Northern Counties Institute for the
Blind, Inverness.*

To the Editor.

Achievements of the Blind.

SIR,—I see in the April number of THE NEW BEACON that you give details of a blind boy winning the Bronze Medallion of the Royal Life Saving Society. I am sure you will be interested to know that in one season the children of this school, under the instruction of Mr. A. Spencer Howard, obtained 14 Intermediate Certificates and 10 Bronze Medallions. It was hoped to get even better results the following year, but the war intervened.

Yours, etc.,

REGINALD G. H. GOUGH,
*Headmaster and Supt.,
East Anglian Schools for
Blind and Deaf Children.*

To the Editor.

SIR,—In the April number of THE NEW BEACON you tell of a blind boy winning the Bronze Medallion. My father informs me, and I am sure you will be interested to know, that at the Leeds Technical Training School for the Blind, in one season, 11 boys gained 26 awards of the Royal Life Saving Society including two Silver Medallions (Awards of Merit).

Yours, etc.,

A. SPENCER HOWARD.

OBITUARY

We much regret to announce the deaths of:—

Dr. Lee Ashton, the well-known Edinburgh organist and teacher of music, who, for 37 years, was Director of Music at the Royal Blind School, Edinburgh.

William Edward Firth, of Harrogate, who was for many years secretary of the Harrogate Blind Association, and was highly esteemed for his zeal in social work of many kinds.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blind Typewriting Instructor at Evening School.—Mr. Gordon Chew, a blind man on the staff of the Meat and Livestock Division of the Ministry of Food in Preston, some of whose achievements were given in THE NEW BEACON for October, 1942, has since been appointed the typewriting instructor at Morecambe Technical Evening School, where he has over 70 sighted pupils. He has just completed his second term, and is now anxiously awaiting the results of his examination candidates. Mr. Chew, who is 21 years of age, has also been elected a member of the faculty of Teachers in Commerce.

An Undaunted Spirit.—Mr. Alfred Morton, of Wylde Green, Birmingham, a blind man of 88, has composed a set of verses, and, as a result of their sale at 2d. a set, has contributed £9 to the Red Cross Fund. He has now started on the disposal of a second edition. "I can do little to help my native land in her hour of need," he says, "but I will do what I can."

Court Grange Concert.—Last month Court Grange School gave what the Headmaster describes as "the best concert we have ever given," in aid of the Red Cross Fund for Prisoners of War. Practically every child contributed. Duets, solo and choir singing, the bamboo pipes, and a demonstration of Braille reading were amongst the items. The most warmly applauded item of all was a really confident and musicianly playing by Teddy Whatford of a very difficult piece of music Greig's "Wedding Day."

The Blind Whistler.—Tom O'Halloran, who last month appeared at the Brighton Grand, has, although blind since birth, been on the stage for 22 years. His remarkable hearing has enabled him to give excellent imitations of bird calls. His beautiful whistling and accurate mimicry bring him loud applause. He first trod the boards after he had won an amateur talent competition in his early days in South Wales. He is a keen follower of football.

Recent Royal Normal College Successes.—The following examination successes are announced by the Royal Normal College for the Blind. G.S. after a pupil's name denotes Gardner Scholar.

ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC—Licentiate—Piano—
Teacher—
Cyril Marris (G.S.)
Leslie Pye (G.S.)

ASSOCIATED BOARD OF THE ROYAL SCHOOLS OF MUSIC,
LONDON—

Grade II—Piano—

Doreen Courtis	—
Ronald Goulden	Distinction
Alan Jackson	Credit
Sheila Wickens	—

Grade IV—Piano—

Harvey Morris (G.S.)	Distinction
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Grade V—Piano—

Audrey Boyes	—
Mildred Riggs	Distinction
Clifford Tighe	Credit

Grade VI—Piano—

Audrey Frood (G.S.)	—
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LONDON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE—Certificate Short-
hand Examinations—

100 Words per Minute—

Ronald Johnston (G.S.)	Distinction
William Klippel	Distinction
John Plummer (G.S.)	Distinction
Hazel Watson (G.S.)	Distinction

80 Words per Minute—

Anna Weiss	—
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L.R.A.M., Diploma Gained.—Mr. Arthur Jones F.R.C.O., L.R.A.M., formerly a Gardner Scholar at the Royal Normal College for the Blind, has obtained the diploma of L.R.A.M. (Piano) as a performer.

Winners of Pencil and Braille Writing Competitions.—At the annual writing competitions for the blind held by the Glasgow Mission to the Outdoor Blind, Miss Jessie Calder, of Port Glasgow, was awarded the first prize for pencil-writing on a frame. Some of the specimens of writing at these competitions are so well and legibly formed that an uninitiated person would scarcely believe that the pencil point had not been guided by sight. In the class for those with less than two years' tuition, the first prize for Braille writing was awarded to Miss Mary Anderson, of Greenock, who is totally deaf as well as blind. She was given a piece of uncontracted text to be put into contracted Braille.

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home.

Kent County Association for the Blind.—Nearly 2,000 people are cared for by the Association, and the Report shows that in spite of war-time difficulties and dangers valuable personal service has been given to them, as well as material help. As a county in a danger zone Kent has suffered heavily from raids, and it is a

matter of thankfulness that only 10 civilians (including a former Mayor of Dover) have lost their sight through enemy action. The Report pays a generous tribute to the work of the National Institute's Homes of Recovery for such victims of the war: "People whose lives apparently had been completely wrecked, and who felt that life held little for them, have gained an entirely new outlook and have been restored in mind and body after a few months' rest and training at one of these Homes." An example is given of an elderly man who came to the office ill and distressed and who, after a few months in one of the Homes of Recovery, appeared a different person—"his health had improved, his mind was alert, and he was looking forward eagerly to some years of activity in the interests of other blind people."

The Report emphasises the need of more Homes for the elderly, the "Maids and Men of Kent and Kentish Folk," and says that this is a want that must be met immediately after the war.

Pearson's Fresh Air Fund.—This Fund, in spite of war-time difficulties, which included the military requisitioning of a Holiday Home just as the children were about to occupy it, managed to arrange holidays for 1,940 children, as well as day outings for over 2,000 children from four centres—"No child went hungry, indeed, if anything some of them were probably overfed"; which strikes the right note in a child's happy day. Mr. Ernest Kessell, C.B.E., for so many years honorary Secretary of the Fund, is to be congratulated in not allowing the difficulties of the times to prevent the continuance of so useful a work; that a Midlands raid caused the horses "to lose their tempers" and demolish all the bread in camp shows something of what an organiser in wartime must be prepared to overcome.

Middlesex Association for the Blind.—The 20th Annual Report devotes a good deal of its war-rationed space to a description of its six Homes, nearly all small and thus able to keep the "home-y" (without a capital) atmosphere which is so desirable. One of the largest is the Home at Cheshunt, where ten women and eight men are accommodated, and here it is good to read that much of the work in house and kitchen is done by the residents, who prepare fruit for jam-making, clean and peel vegetables, etc. Of another Home we are told that the Superintendent "has a great aptitude for making the best out of the most unpromising material"—a most valuable asset, for some, at any rate, of those who enter Homes are not well-adapted to community life, and it is by no means easy to

keep such people reasonably happy and contented. The Report deals with the placing of blind men in sighted factories making munitions, and pays tribute to the trouble taken by the management of such factories to find jobs suitable for the blind, and to make factory work safe and practicable for them.

Chester Blind Welfare Society.—An interesting paragraph in the Report deals with the contribution of the local blind to the war effort; some have organised savings groups, others schemes for salvage collection; some have knitted for the Forces; others have digged for victory, and some have made their contribution by refusing to accept a free wireless licence. A new social centre has been opened during the year and two others have started again, so that there are now ten centres meeting monthly except during the worst of the winter.

St. John's Guild for the Blind.—The Home belonging to the Guild, like almost every other Home in the country, is being sorely taxed to provide accommodation for those blind women who are members of the Church of England and like to live in a congenial religious atmosphere. Vacancies rarely occur at the Guild's Home at St. Alban's, and applications for admission have to be constantly refused. In August, 1942, a broadcast appeal was made, which resulted in the raising of over £2,440, "a truly wonderful result," which will make it possible for a Home in Worthing (where the Guild already has an active branch) to become a reality after the war, or as soon as war conditions permit. The Guild records the founding of a new branch at Ealing, helped by the Rev. Mother and Sisters of an Anglican convent in the neighbourhood, and the branch formed last year at Wimbledon flourishes.

Empire.

New Zealand Institute for the Blind.—The Report for 1941-42 records the 50th anniversary of the Institute's work, which now covers nearly 1,100 people throughout the Dominion. The numbers of children in the school have fallen to 24, owing to wartime conditions, but an effort is made to keep in touch with absent pupils by correspondence. In Wellington the Red Cross Society continues to act in the capacity of an Advisory Committee, and details a special Committee to care for the blind, who are visited and looked after in sickness and in health "in a hundred and one ways."

Sydney Industrial Blind Institution, N.S.W.—The 61st Annual Report tells of a record total of nearly £30,500 raised by the sale of blind-made goods. One hundred and twenty-seven workers

are employed, and their average earnings per head, with compassionate allowances, sick pay and workmen's compensation, exceed £115 per annum. Home teachers travelled 19,600 miles throughout New South Wales, and over 11,700 books in embossed type were circulated. "Regular publication of magazines has been maintained and new Moon type books are still coming to hand" from the National Institute for the Blind. War conditions make the Talking Book service more difficult, but it is still being maintained and extended.

Mission to the Blind of Burma.—In "Jottings from the Front," Miss Dorothy Jackson (sister of the late Fr. Jackson) has given details of the present position of the workers for the Mission. The women teachers with the girls were evacuated, and as European missionaries were called upon to help the Government as nurses or to leave for India, the girls were placed in the care of Christian households, where it was felt that they were safer than living as a community. Mr. Turner carried on at the workshops for some time, though when Rangoon was raided most of the boys and masters were sent back to their homes. When the workshops closed down, Mr. Turner was sent to help at an evacuation camp, but on his way there was attacked by Burmese dacoits, robbed and left for dead by the roadside. He was found by a police car next morning and taken to hospital, where, in spite of very serious injuries, he made good progress and was eventually sent on by hospital train to India and admitted to hospital for further treatment there. "Kemmdine was last heard of in flames, so we do not know whether we have any property left there."

Foreign

Perkins Institution (Mass.).—A number of the photographs which illustrate the Report for 1942 show the influence of war; we see the boys and girls trooping to their air-raid shelter (which we hope may never be needed); there are pictures of salvage collections made by Upper and Lower School, and a group of "victory peelers" prepare the potatoes for dinner. The staff are taking part in many war activities, including first-aid and A.R.P. courses, and the boys and girls have made collapsible stretchers and many knitted garments for the Red Cross. Seventeen tons of paper and metal have been collected for salvage, and the proceeds of the sale have been put into Defence Bonds. There are nearly 300 blind persons on the Perkins Register, of whom 248 are pupils; among the pupils there are 12 who are deaf-blind. An inquiry into the

amount of vision of the pupils showed a decrease in the number of those with very limited sight, and an increase of those with a maximum amount of vision for admission to the school, thus confirming the view that schools for the blind must adjust their syllabus to meet the needs of the visually handicapped rather than the totally blind.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRaille MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances:		s.	d.
19013	Adams, Baer and Meyer. There are such Things, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19014	Kern, J. Dearly Beloved, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19015	Kern, J. You were never Lovelier, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19016	McHugh, J. A Touch of Texas, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6

BRaille BOOKS.

Forthcoming Pandas.

No. 65. This is Death Calling, by James Sandys.
3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

A small girl, a mongrel dog and an empty house set Mr. Springfield, that clever, charming and ruthless little lawyer—and incidentally Inspector Carforth of the C.I.D.—a tough problem. There is a sense of atmosphere in the empty house which is eerie in the extreme.

No. 66. A Time for Greatness, by Herbert Agar.
3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

Here is a book which challenges you directly to face the problems of our time and to take vigorous action to preserve our heritage. The author sees the post-war problems as primarily human and urges us and his fellow-countrymen, the Americans, not to throw away once more the hopes of mankind. The *New York Review of Literature* describes it as an "outstanding document of our times."

MOON BOOKS.

4648-4654 *Action at Aquila*, by H. Allen. 7 vols. (Limited Edition.)

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

Theology:		Vols.
Balmforth, H. (ed.). Gospel according to St. Luke	.. .. .	5
Lewis, C. S. The Problem of Pain	.. .. .	2
Micklem, Nathaniel. Doctrine of the Redemption	.. .. .	2
Shoemaker, Samuel M. The Gospel according to You, and other Sermons	.. .. .	2
Social and Political:		
Bell, Clive. Civilisation	.. .. .	2
Bentley, Phyllis. Here is America	.. .. .	2
Beveridge, Sir William. Social Insurance and Allied Services	.. .. .	9
Gollancz, Victor. Russia and Ourselves	.. .. .	1
Pilgrim Trust, Report to. Men without Work	.. .. .	8

Vols.

Pollard, R. S. W. Beveridge in Brief (from "The Manchester Guardian")	1
Webb, Sydney and Beatrice. Industrial Democracy	15
Education :	
Wilson, Richard. Discussing Education	2
Science :	
Firth, Raymond. Human Types	3
Essays :	
Beerbohm, Max. Works and More	3
Forster, E. M. Abinger Harvest	5
Huxley, Aldous. On the Margin	2
French :	
Kastner, L. E., and Marks, J. New Course of French Composition. Book II (Intermediate Stage)	5
Montesquieu. Lettres Persanes	5
Mornet, Daniel. Histoire de la littérature et de la pensée françaises	5
German :	
Goethe. Faust, ed. Calvin Thomas	6
Hebrew :	
Adler, Michael. Students' Hebrew Grammar	4
Bible in Hebrew :	
Hosea to Haggai	1
Zechariah, Malachi, Proverbs	1
Biography :	
Byron in Italy, by Peter Quennell	4
Dickinson, Goldsworth Lowes, by E. M. Forster	4
Henrietta Maria, by Carola Oman	5
Miscellaneous :	
Austin, A. B. In your Stride	4
Blom, Eric. Music in England	4
Hives, Frank. Ju-ju and Justice in Nigeria	4
MacArthur, Wilson. Road to the Nile	2

TALKING BOOKS LIBRARY.

RECORDED BY THE SOUND RECORDING COMMITTEE.

Fiction :		<i>Records</i>
Austen, Jane. Sense and Sensibility	16	
Darlington, W. A. Alf's New Button	8	
Eberhart, M. G. Speak No Evil	9	
Forester, C. S. The Earthly Paradise	10	
Masefield, John. Dead Ned	11	
McDonell, A. G. The Crew of the Anaconda	10	
Morris, W. F. The Channel Mystery	12	
Rhode, John, and Dickson, Carter. Drop to his Death	10	
Non-Fiction :		
Air Ministry. The Battle of Britain	2	
Air Ministry. Bomber Command	6	
Guedalla, Philip. The Hundredth Year	11	
Hay, Ian. The Battle of Flanders	3	
Neivens, Allan. Short History of the United States	7	
Rauschnig, Hermann. Hitler Speaks	11	
Vansittart, Lord. Black Record	3	
White, Antonia. The B.B.C. at War	3	

N.I.B. ROYAL ALBERT HALL BOX.

The National Institute's Box at the Royal Albert Hall will be available for blind music lovers this year. Tickets for most regular concerts may be obtained, free of charge, by application to the Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1. Requests for tickets should reach the Institute at least one week before the date of the concert for which they are required.

NEW S.P.C.K. PUBLICATION.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, S.P.C.K. House, Northumberland Avenue, W.C.2, announces the publication in Braille of a Penguin Special: What the Church Teaches, by Dr. Alfred Blunt, Bishop of Bradford. Price 1s. 3d. net.

BRaille CENSORSHIP.

Much unnecessary delay is caused by failure to observe the correct procedure when sending mail to the National Institute for censoring. All packets should be sent to Censorship Department, National Institute for the Blind, 24, Lansdowne Road, Bournemouth, Hants. The name and address of the person to whom the packet is to be sent should not appear on the outside of the packet, but must be written on an enclosed label, ready for forwarding. Mention should also be made of the name and address of the sender.

VACANCIES IN HOMES, ETC.

30th April, 1943.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Northampton	—
Bloomfield, Leamington	—
Wavertree House, Hove	—
The Haven, Scarborough	—
Fair Lawn, Totteridge (for convalescence or short periods of rest)	10
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea ..	—
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring ..	—
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay ..	5
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth	2

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

Notice to Advertisers.

As war conditions occasionally cause unavoidable delay in production and publication, advertisers are advised to make the closing date for receipt of applications not earlier than the 1st of the month following date of issue.

WANTED—for a Harrison Sun Circular Ribber, a 60 cylinder $4\frac{1}{2}$ diameter, or a 54 cylinder (dial and needles to match) or dial only for a 60 cylinder. Write "A," c/o Editor, THE NEW BEACON, 224, Great Portland Street, W.1.

SIGHTED BASKET-MAKER thoroughly experienced in general work wanted as Instructor-Supervisor of blind workers. Permanency, good prospects. Apply, Superintendent, South Devon and Cornwall Blind Institution, Plymouth.

BLIND WELFARE SERVICE. Those aspiring to hold appointments as Home Visitors of the Blind are invited to send for details of a Scheme designed to assist students to obtain necessary Diploma. Apply (enclosing stamp) to: H. N. Vickerstaff, Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17.

Sighted female **HOME TEACHER** for Birmingham area. State age and experience. Diploma not essential. Three recent testimonials required. Commencing salary £3 weekly plus 12s. cost-of-living bonus. Apply Secretary, Royal Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17.

The New **BEACON**

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 318.

JUNE 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

SALESMANSHIP AS A CAREER FOR THE BLIND

By ERIC W. PAGE

AT first sight the idea of selling, that is mobile selling of the commercial traveller type, together with sales management of the modern standard, may appear to be sheer flights of imagination when regarded as careers for the non-sighted and partially-sighted.

But are they?

Let us, first of all, consider what has been achieved already and placed on record.

Men who have totally lost their vision while carrying out their normal duties as sales representatives have "stuck to the wheel" and carried on with the job with marked success. All honour is due to them; they have proved that they can sell despite the disability.

The writer, being partially-sighted from birth, has held a post for ten years, in competition with sighted men, as outside representative to one of the largest sighted commercial concerns in the world.

Thus, we have at least, some concrete evidence as a basis on which to consider the proposition.

The writer applied for the post of representative and obtained it with only a partial disclosure to his employers of the extent of his defective vision, but it is not suggested that our men should be employed by sighted organisations under these conditions. The mental and nervous strain involved in covering up even partial-sightedness is very high. As in all occupations to be considered for the blind, the job must be adapted to meet the limitations of our world.

In recent years the commercial traveller's calling has undergone a change which is in favour of our men. The old-time representative sold his products solely on his own personal ability to convince, and make lasting friends and contacts for his employers, so much so, that when he left a firm his connection went with him.

But to-day, with the advent of sales management, market research and advertising in all its branches, the scope and demands of the salesman's job have undergone a great change. The old school of commercial travellers refer to the younger generation as "order collectors." While this definition may not be entirely correct in its implications, since it is obvious that a high degree of initiative and resourcefulness is still required to carry out even an "order collector's" job, yet there

is a sufficiently strong element of the truth in the phrase to bring home the application to the blind community.

By advertising, the public are educated to recognise and ask for a product under its branded name and the retailer induced to stock it to meet this demand. If a new technique in sales management is adopted in which the advertising is directed towards the simplification and assistance of the non-sighted salesman in his difficulties of demonstration then we have made a step forward.

Our next problem is the reaction of the buying public, including the retailers, to the idea of our men calling on them. The writer has carried out a limited amount of unofficial market research on this point. The net result was an indication that, provided that the men were efficient within their limitations *and no attempt made to "sell blindness,"* either directly or indirectly, the salesmen would be as welcome as any sighted representatives.

As indicated above, the idea is not to place partially-sighted or non-sighted men in sighted firms, but to modify the job to our limitations by creating our own selling organisations, marketing our own registered proprietary brands of products. Controlling such an organisation would be a sales manager with outside selling experience and a knowledge of the sighted and non-sighted communities. Apart from his normal functions of directing sales strategy and policy, he would control the operation of two distinct classes of men :—

(a) Partially-sighted area managers, appointed to open up accounts and then introduce their colleagues who would be—

(b) Non-sighted men, who would continue to work the accounts under the supervision of the area managers.

Some illustrations from the writer's experience may prove valuable. Briefly the main problems to be met are the following ;—

1. Cost of mobility since a chauffeur has to be employed. The writer met and covered this cost economically by careful planning of territory working, to reduce expenses to a minimum.

2. The finding of the prospects and customers which exist on any one section of a territory, since no local directories can be consulted, or maps read. Here, an alert mind, a ready tongue and the ability to make friends quickly, will provide all that is necessary to form a list of prospects.

3. Inability to recognise prospects and customers provided the biggest difficulty experienced by the writer. By diplomacy and tact

it was removed to a great degree, but in such an organisation as that indicated above, where the physical defect is admitted, this problem shrinks into insignificance.

4. Price quotation, handling of money, routine correspondence and the giving of receipts are points which can all be covered, and were covered by the writer by the use of memory. At an interview, no reading was permissible and the facts had to be carried in mind from the firm's data which had been read to the writer earlier in the day.

His vision was sufficient to enable him to "locate his signature" on receipts and fill in the figures in sighted longhand. (He can both read and write very large shorthand adapted and reduced to simple outline.)

In the case of a non-sighted organisation, the use of Braille will eliminate the last trace of such difficulties, since all statements can be sent out in duplicate, a Braille copy for the representative being attached to the customer's sighted copy.

With a careful selection of the right products, yielding a sufficient margin of profit to cover what may be a slightly higher selling-cost, together with the selection of the men with the will to succeed, selling and sales management may be embarked on to a point where the blind may carry out the work, raising the standard from the peddling of merchandise to a highly efficient commercial organisation, taking its place in the sighted world.

FOREIGN NEWS

The Audioscale.—A new instrument, the audioscale, which enables the blind to weigh articles accurately, was demonstrated some time ago at the American Foundation for the Blind. The idea came from Miss Evelyn Watson, herself a blind woman. This device, which can be attached to any type of weighing machine, operates on the aeroplane radio beam principle, and gives out a different note for each weight. In war industries this instrument may be the means of opening new fields for the blind.

Night Blindness.—In an address to the American Psychiatry Association, Lieutenant-Commander James L. McCartney, of Brooklyn Naval Hospital, said :

"One of the greatest dangers of tropical life is night blindness among the troops. Overstimulation by bright light may cause this affliction with a person having perfectly normal vision in the daytime but useless as an observer after sunset."

HOME NEWS

War Workshop for the Blind Opened at Wolverhampton.—What is claimed to be the first war workshop of its kind to be equipped in a blind institution in this country was opened last month by Councillor A. G. B. Owen, Managing Director of Rubery, Owen & Co., Ltd., Darlaston, who is also chairman of Darlaston Council. This factory plant has accommodation for 21 blind workers at Wolverhampton and Dudley Districts Blind Institution, and the Darlaston firm have built and equipped the building, which is 40 feet by 20 feet. Work these blind men and women are doing consists of inspecting bolts by setting gauge, and they do it so well that their work on the whole is better than that done by many sighted people.

Councillor Owen said the project had been amply successful, congratulated the workers for what they were doing, and added that he was certain that they would do even better. He saw no reason whatsoever why this work should not continue after the war.

Mr. John Chamberlain, Superintendent and Secretary, said about 18 months ago he made initial inquiries with industrialists to see if blind people could be found a place in war industry, but at first firms were rather sceptical. Mr. Chamberlain added that he was keen to get work done on the institution's premises, and Councillor Owen showed such enthusiasm that within a week a room was equipped.

Councillor A. Byrne-Quinn, Mayor of Wolverhampton, said this was another example of Wolverhampton again being in the front with yet another project. He had no doubt that this would be the forerunner of other workshops being built in other towns.

Opening of the Katharine Knapp Sunshine Home, Northampton.—The Katharine Knapp Sunshine Home for Blind Babies was officially opened on the 13th May, 1943, by Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., Chairman of the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind. Among the 130 people present were Mr. H. J. Wagg, Vice-Chairman of the National Institute, Mrs. Chambers, Chairman of the Homes Committee, Mrs. W. Lees, the Mayoress of Northampton, Mr. J. L. Holland, the Director of Education, Mr. H. C. Perrin, the Secretary for Education, Dr. Emily Shaw, the Medical Officer of Health for the Home, Dr. Eric Shaw, Mr. J. S. Thompson, Chairman, and Mr.

S. Jackson, Secretary of the Northampton Association for the Blind. The Dedication Service was conducted by the Rev. Canon C. E. Bolam and the Rev. M. L. Couchman, the Vicar of Kingsthorpe.

Sir Beachcroft said :

“ This is the fourth Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, and a fifth will shortly be open near London. Until recently three Homes providing for close on one hundred babies were sufficient. In the last two years there has been a rapid increase in the demand for accommodation, and this new Home at Northampton is already filled to capacity. The other three Homes are Nursery Schools which we believe rank among the best nursery schools in the country. We have been most fortunate in persuading Miss Riley, the Matron, and Miss Hunt to take charge of this new Home.

“ We are charmed and honoured by the presence of the Mayoress. We are most happy to have here representatives of the Northampton Town and County Association for the Blind, headed by its Chairman, Mr. J. Thompson. In Northampton, as elsewhere, the local services for the blind are carried out by the Voluntary Association and the Borough Council working in co-operation. We, the National Body of whose activities these Homes for Blind Babies are one, co-operate with both in the interest of the public no less than of the blind themselves.

“ The necessity of opening new Homes does not necessarily mean an increase in the number of blind babies. But there is evidence, unfortunately, of some increase in the number of blind babies—a very serious fact. After losing my own sight forty years ago, I have been trying to do what I could to help my blind fellow-creatures. I now see more clearly than ever that the first thing to be done is to stop blindness at its source. For that reason we at the National Institute are throwing ourselves heart and soul into new moves for fostering research into the eye and everything to do with the preservation of sight.”

Sir Beachcroft declared the Home open and named it “ The Katharine Knapp Sunshine Home for Blind Babies.” “ We are naming it after Mrs. Knapp,” he said, “ who for many years gave the Institute, as Chairman of its Homes Committee and of its General Purposes Committee, invaluable help. She loved our

work; she loved the blind; and we hold her name in admiring and affectionate memory. I am certain that every baby who comes into this Home will benefit by the example she gave to us all of humour, hard work and commonsense."

Sir Beachcroft then unveiled a tablet bearing the words "This Home is dedicated to the care and education of blind babies and is in grateful memory of Mrs. Knapp, of Little Orchard, Denham (formerly of Linford Hall, Bucks), Chairman of the Homes Committee of the National Institute for the Blind."

Fifteen babies were in residence on the opening day. They mixed with the visitors in the garden during the afternoon, and after tea the guests were allowed to roam over the Home, and many of them saw the babies having their tea, playing on the swings and nursery slide, and finally being bathed and put to bed. The local Girl Guides were very much in evidence helping not only in the kitchen, where they undertook the washing up, but also in the bathroom, where they helped to bath the babies and put them to bed.

Home for Blind Evacuees from Bristol and Somerset.—Eighteen blind people were taken to Lympsham Rectory during Bristol air raids and later were accommodated at Westleigh, Burnham-on-Sea, and their numbers increased by an additional six.

Now, the Hall, Burnham-on-Sea, has been purchased to accommodate 50 more blind people from raid-damaged areas in Bristol and Somerset.

The heroine of this venture is Miss J. E. Diffey, a Bristol home teacher of the blind, who, without any financial means with which to accomplish the task, has worked to magnificent effect in caring for these sightless victims of the raids.

Last month a deputation from the Somerset Association for the Blind, composed of Mr. A. E. Eastwood, Mr. A. W. Vivien-Neal, M.C., and Miss Kirk (Secretary), met Mr. Fred M. Burris and Mr. Ernest J. Taylor, of Bristol, and agreed to the formation of a trust and management committee, and the first blind people have arrived and are now in residence at the Hall.

Edinburgh Proposes Uniform Scale of Assistance.—At the last meeting of the Edinburgh Town Council, a long discussion took place over the Public Health Committee's proposal that the Counties of Cities Association be requested to make recommendations for a uniform scale of assistance to blind persons in Scotland.

The recommendation was opposed by Mr. Hardie, who submitted an amendment providing for an amended scale of 35s. per week to all

applicants aged 18 years and over, with appropriate allowances for applicants under that age, no rent allowance and the application of the Determination of Needs Act, 1941, in assessing the means of the blind applicant.

Mr. A. H. A. Murray pointed out that when Edinburgh went to the Counties of Cities Association the blind in the city were getting more than in any other city. He was convinced that the scales were satisfactory. If, however, to get a uniform scale in Scotland, Edinburgh should increase the rate, he was willing to do so.

Mr. Gilzean protested against the means test which, he contended, was a great hardship on the children of blind people.

By 29 votes to 13, the Public Health Committee's recommendation was approved.

Low Earnings of Swansea Blind.—Comment on the lowness of the average earnings of employable blind at the Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind was made by Mr. R. A. Wetherall, borough treasurer, when an application came before the corporation Blind Persons Committee for an increase in augmentation. The committee had figures for South Wales before them which showed that the average earnings of males at Swansea—16s. 10d. a week—was low compared with other places. The guaranteed minimum at Swansea for these men was 65s. a week, which included 15s. war bonus. Towards this the corporation paid 20s. augmentation, plus 2s. 6d. for bonus. It was agreed to recommend the council to increase their contribution to the bonus by 5s.

Motor Industry asked to Employ Blind Labour.—In response to a request from St. Dunstan's, the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders has appealed to all members of the motor industry to consider the employment of war-blinded and other blind people in their works. The Society states that it has been ascertained by investigation of motor establishments that blind persons can be efficiently employed on bar capstans, trimming, radiator and other assembly and inspection. Other less skilled jobs are: broaching, tooth-rounding (Taylor Hobson), jig-drilling, Duplex millers on con-rods, and hand-power drilling and riveting.

More Pay for Blind Shorthand-Typists.—Blind shorthand-typists and typists employed in Government offices are to have proficiency tests to qualify them for extra pay. Candidates passing the typing test will earn 5s. extra per week, with an additional 3s. for those proficient in shorthand—8s. in all. Both tests will last three hours each.

Blind Persons in Air Raids.—In the House of Commons last month, Sir Ian Fraser asked the Home Secretary if, where a husband or wife was a registered blind person or disabled in the highest degree, he would grant exemption from fire-watching to the other partner.

Mr. Morrison agreed that such persons ought not to be left unattended during raids, but in view of the great variety of individual circumstances the best way to secure this end would be to leave hardship tribunals to decide who should be exempt.

Eye Test in Juvenile Court.—An 8-year-old boy was given an eyesight test last month by the Norwich Juvenile magistrates. His parents were summoned for failing to make suitable provision for the child's education.

Dr. G. W. Riddell, Norwich medical officer for the schools, said upon examination the boy's eyesight was found to be only one-tenth normal, and he was considered "school blind." He required special education, and the East Anglian School for Blind and Deaf Children was recommended.

The boy's mother told the Bench she and her husband objected to the boy going away as he would be very unhappy. She pointed out he was able to see moving picture films.

The summons was dismissed.

Bedminster Blind's Gift for Russia.—Members of the Bedminster Social Club for the Blind, Bristol, have just made a gift of £52 to Mrs. Churchill's "Aid to Russia" Fund, bringing their total for charity this year to £68 os. 6d. All the members are unemployed blind men and women, but when they heard Mrs. Churchill make her first appeal they decided they must do something to help.

New Address of Essex County Association.—The Essex County Association for the Blind has been obliged to vacate its offices at 40 Duke Street, Chelmsford, as they were badly damaged in a recent air raid. Its temporary address is Midland Bank Chambers, Chelmsford.

Wigan Society.—The Wigan, Leigh and District Workshops for the Blind will in future be known as the Wigan, Leigh and District Society for the Blind.

Memorial to Dr. Alfred Hollins.—By the death of Dr. Alfred Hollins, on 17th May, 1942, the world of music sustained a grievous loss. Blind from birth, Dr. Hollins, by his natural genius and industry, overcame this serious handicap and came to be acknowledged universally as one of the most accomplished executants on the organ. To very many his recitals were memorable events, and his own compositions have given great pleasure to players and listeners alike.

It is proposed to establish a fitting memorial to this great musician and most lovable man. For this purpose a representative committee has been formed and a memorial fund has been instituted. The committee has decided to award annually a scholarship to a blind student of the organ and a prize for the best original organ composition submitted for examination. The work of the successful candidate would be printed and published by the memorial fund committee. It is hoped that these proposals, which have the approval of various bodies, will receive most generous support.

Subscriptions may be sent to the honorary treasurer, Mr. William D. Leask, National Bank of Scotland, 81 Princes Street, Edinburgh.

St. Dunstan's Bridge Team.—For the second successive year a bridge team from St. Dunstan's is to visit Harrogate from July 4th to 9th. They will play matches against many of the local bridge and golf clubs in the town.

The Queen Attends Matinée in Aid of the Blind.—Her Majesty the Queen, Patron of the Greater London Fund, accompanied by the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret, was present at a Matinée of Barrie's Play "What Every Woman Knows" at the Lyric Theatre on May 12th. The entire proceeds of the performance were generously given by Mr. Jay Pomeroy, lessee of the theatre, to the Fund, and Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., K.C.V.O., C.B.E., has received a letter expressing the Queen's pleasure at the result. Her Majesty was received by Sir Beachcroft Towse (Vice-President of the Fund), accompanied by Miss Bertram, Lady May of Weybridge (Chairman of the Special Committee), Lady Fulton (Chairman of the Social Committee), Mr. R. H. Hyde Thomson (Chairman of the Fund), Mrs. Hyde Thomson and Mr. Jay Pomeroy.

During an interval, Dame Irene Vanbrugh, Miss Barbara Mullen and Mr. John Stuart, principals in the play, were bidden to the royal box. Dame Irene and Mrs. Cecil Harcourt (mother of Miss Diana Gould, also appearing in the play) were already good friends of the Fund and took an active part as members of the Organising Committee.

Mrs. Howard Wyndham supervised the programme sellers, who brought in a considerable sum as a result of a souvenir issued with the programmes bearing the Queen's portrait, peculiarly appropriate, as the date was the sixth anniversary of the Coronation. Mr. Jay Pomeroy conducted an auction, the articles including two lemons, bought in by the entire cast; and a tray autographed by every "star" appearing in London at the present time.

WE LIVE AGAIN-IV.

By F. BURVILLE.

NO one will seek to deny that State aid has brought a goodly measure of economic security to the blind as a whole. Workshop employees in particular appreciate this fact; we know, too, that an attempt has been made (with some success) on the part of certain workshop managements to co-operate in buying and selling; and I think there is a larger amount of good will in evidence than in days gone by. But how long will it be before the blind industrialist who possesses outstanding ability takes his rightful place in industry and assists in directing his own affairs? In the past thirty years many blind persons have been trained in our schools and workshops, yet in no single instance (at least in the London area) has a blind person been posted officially and on equal terms with the sighted as manager, foreman, or instructor. Is it conceivable that over such a long period, and from such large numbers trained, such a state of affairs is in the natural order of things, or is there some other explanation for the circumstance?

Please allow me to narrate a few incidents from my experiences in the sighted world, so that we may be in a better position to make true assessment of men and things.

For a number of years music was my all absorbing hobby. I could play the cornet sufficiently well to be accepted as a member of two brass bands, one with headquarters in East London, the other in North London. Working for two bands kept me very busy, with indoor concerts and rehearsals during the winter months; parades, competitions and outdoor work in the summer months. It took my fellow bandsmen a few weeks to get used to the fact that a totally blind man was working with them, but as soon as they found I could do all that was asked of me, and that I knew my job as a bandsman, I was accepted as an equal. At no time did the management or members of the band add to my difficulties. Indeed, it was always a pleasure for one or the other of them to run me over portions of music before rehearsal; and strange as it may sound, I was often able to return the kindnesses by helping them to interpret passages of music with which they experienced some little difficulty. After a few months I was promoted to the position of assistant soloist in the East

London combination, and soloist in the North London, with the added duty of assistant teacher to the junior band. My work with the juniors consisted in teaching them correct intonation and interpretation, whilst the teacher in charge taught the boys to read, and schooled them in deportment, etc.

The people with whom I worked became so used to me that it seemed they forgot at times that I could not see; this, of course, was just what I wanted. They did not claim to be experts on any matter related to blind welfare, but were anxious that the work in hand should be well and properly done. Their simple process of reasoning told them that here was a man with definite abilities which might be pooled and so make for a successful whole.

It was in the summer of 1927 that a proprietor of a music shop adjacent to King's Cross and conductor of a band in Hoxton, asked me if I would undertake the task of escorting 600 children to the seaside for a day's outing. This meant that I should have to take charge of a number of instrumentalists drawn from several London bands, march the children from the "Angel," Islington, to Liverpool Street Station; arrange two programmes of music, one suitable for outdoor playing and one for indoors; and finally, march the children back from Liverpool Street to place of starting. Previous experience had shown the authorities who had the undertaking in hand that a reliable man must be in charge of such a group of bandsmen, and although there were more able men in our circle than myself, I was considered to be the best available person to do the job. If my purpose was merely to write about myself, I would tell the reader just how I surmounted the several difficulties inseparable from such an undertaking, but this article is intended to serve as an appeal to our administrators to give the intelligent and highly talented industrialist the opportunity to contribute of his best to industry. Therefore, I will say briefly, the job was done to the satisfaction of all concerned, and such was the spirit of comradeship that on our return journey we were met by a considerable number of bandsmen who, on learning of the job I was doing, volunteered to meet us at Liverpool Street in case we were over tired; incidentally the engagement was a paid one.

I remember on one occasion when the band from the East London district was giving a charity concert, and the speaker who was to make an appeal during the interval failed to turn up, and I was requested to deputise for him. I had finished the first half of the programme with a couple of items, "The Holy City" and "Softly Awakes My Heart." The conductor no doubt had his own reasons for withholding his request until I had got through with them, for the appeal was on behalf of one of our blind-employing agencies, and ironically enough it was the very agency which I had some years before seriously criticised for what I regarded as a piece of maladministration. Scarcely had my applause died away when I heard my name being given by the organiser of the concert as kindly deputising for the gentleman who had been unavoidably detained. I had a mere second or two in which to make up my mind whether to speak on behalf of the agency or to decline. Then with a rush the thought came to me (if you decline you are letting down your fellow men and women, and those genuine and valiant welfare workers who have done far more than you to right the wrongs of this world), and so I spoke to the audience to whom I had been playing a minute or so before. Apparently, my talk was as welcome as my playing, for their response was magnificent.

I came to London at the time when the campaign for State Aid for the Blind was at its height. The employees at my workshop were divided into two distinct factions upon this question, some being more or less satisfied with life as they were living it, and others who were desirous of replacing voluntary service by State control. The former group consisted of elderly men and craftsmen of very good ability; incidentally, it would appear that they were in receipt of a pension in addition to the earnings; and although this circumstance was harshly criticised by the younger element as being anti-progressive in its function, I really think the harshness was prompted more from jealousy than from any sound reasoning.

Herbert X seemed the only workman able to steer a clear course between the rival factions, and as he was held in high esteem by the management, I should like to pass on some advice which he gave upon the question which aroused such deep concern among my shop-mates.

"You are quite a young man, and will live to see many changes. Don't be too ready to sweep away the voluntary system, for although

we are conscious of many shortcomings, the voluntary idea of service is a fundamental part of human make-up, and to seek to abolish this kind of service is tantamount to turning one's back on nature." My friend continued his support of the work done by some committees attached to workshops by pointing out that quite a number of blind men have been given jobs which entail responsibility, and in return for faithful service have been duly compensated. "You will find that with the introduction of State aid, there will be the danger of humanitarian principles being supplanted by hard, unsympathetic methods. Also, we will lose what jobs we hold, seeing basket-makers will take our places and become experts over night. The only qualifications these men can possibly have for some years is that of being good craftsmen with not the slightest previous knowledge of blind welfare work, or what blindness means. They will in the main serve the business side of the workshop and will act as a link between the employees and the head, with powers to report and to make recommendations; in short, the expert will be endowed with authority to determine the future of all the blind folk who come within his purview. The more we accept State control, the less active will become our workshop committees, and with the decline of the active interest of the voluntary committee our opportunity for appeal to an independent human agency has vanished." My friend's final words told me that once he had a post as instructor, but when the school at which he taught came under the control of a department of State he lost it. Herbert X died before he was old, but much that he told me has come to pass.

Twenty-three years ago there was a man working as instructor at one of our best institutions, who was introduced to me by the secretary as a man in whom both he and the committee had a great deal of confidence. At this time, in addition to being a teacher, he was the right hand of the new foreman. To-day that man is working as a journeyman, although he continues to give advice and guidance to both blind and sighted employees. At the same institution is another man, not quite of the same calibre as the former workman, but thought much of by the authorities. This man was employed as instructor for a while, but as State grants became increasingly available, more trainees came, and an additional instructor was engaged. The new teacher could see, and was placed in charge of the department. He had no previous experience of the blind, but his remuneration was at a much higher rate than

that of his sightless colleague; and soon the blind instructor, who had never been given official status, was submitted to governance which became intolerable. All who knew him will agree that a more conscientious teacher and worker could not be found, and although he appealed to the expert to put him on a level with the new teacher, nothing could be done; and he was assured the committee would uphold the expert's decision. To-day this man is also working as a journeyman. The sighted instructor was given another teacher, a shop-mate of his, but both of them made such a hopeless mess of things that they soon left to make room for two others, one being nearly 60 years of age, the other over 60; while the two blind men, who had in their day been thought much of, worked as journeymen and continued to give assistance voluntarily to all and sundry.

It is not my wish to give the impression that State aid is a failure by comparison with the voluntary system. As a matter of fact, the industrialist to-day, for the most part, has a comfortable shop in which to work. His income (up to the outbreak of the present war) was about on a par with the general run of engineers, carpenters, etc. He is well provided for during the training period, and is generally dressed in a respectable fashion. These conditions serve to satisfy most men whether they are blind or sighted, but as in the seeing world, so with us; there are those whose personality, tastes and accomplishments entitle them to strive to obtain the fullest scope for their abilities. Their achievements prove their right to a strong measure of self-determination, and every possible means should be adopted to secure for them the fruits of their rightful claims.

Now I would like the reader to re-live with me three days of 1934, when I sat for the examination for the Craft Instructors Diploma, held under the auspices of the College of Teachers of the Blind.

October 16th, 1934, which was the first day of examination found me at Swiss Cottage School for the Blind ready for anything that was to come along in the way of a test. According to the time-table, the morning session would be a busy one, with Braille reading, writing, deaf-dumb manual test, and a written essay. There were only five entrants in my section, and to my surprise none of them came from London except myself. This fact surprised me, for a letter in my pocket told me that regulations are likely to be introduced very shortly, requiring all technical instructors of blind institutions to have the Craft Instructors Diploma

for the particular trade in which they give instruction; further, that these regulations had been made for the purpose of securing a better type of instructor than is generally available. Liverpool, Newcastle and Bristol were represented. The fact that I alone was the single representative from London more than astonished me. My mind went completely off the immediate concern to dwell upon the contents of the letters I carried with me. I wondered why the basket-makers from the London workshops (who were at present teaching blind trainees) were not present in anticipation of the pending regulations.

Now my readers perhaps think that we people take to Braille reading as easily as a duck to water. That is not always true. In my own case I had been fortunate in having a wife fond of reading and with a fairly mixed taste, besides being a delightful reader. This blessing led me to take the line of least resistance and forsake my Braille, which could never be quite so acceptable to me as the others. Sense of touch diminishes, fingers become hard with work, and on such an occasion when Braille reading becomes imperative, as was the case in the examination, some way must be found to make me at least a passable reader. A bottle of strong soap solution in which to soak my fingers at mornings, tips of fingers massaged after work, soaked again and smeared with vaseline and bandaged for the night—this, with four months' actual practice at Braille reading, served to make me proficient enough to pass. A cup of tea at midday sustained me for the afternoon session, and I felt none the worse for the theory papers other than having a bad head and some misgivings on account of the typewriter I had used, a model quite new to me.

The day following found me more at my ease because I was to spend the whole day at my trade (two sessions of three hours each) satisfying examiners as to my ability as a craftsman. To interest you further, please allow me to sketch briefly the day's procedure.

Two of the candidates sat one on either side of me, and two at the farther side of the shop, out of earshot. Do you know, reader, just how much my ears aided me on that day? Of course not! Well, then, I will tell you. A sound of quickly swishing willows on my right together with certain other sounds spoke of a workman who could fill a van with baskets in a short time, but not for exhibition purposes. On my left the man knew his job; that is, if I could read the sounds correctly. With years of workshop practice one becomes used to particular sounds

made by a workman, and cannot only gauge how far advanced he is with the construction of his article, but can judge the kind of craftsman he is. There are definite scientific rules to follow in constructing a basket some of which will result in easily recognisable sounds; also, the cunning workman will use his tools in a particular way after years of experience, and at given stages of his work. In this way I was able to learn for myself the type of workman on either side of me.

It was when the examiners stood within earshot to watch us perform with our willows that I silently thanked Providence for giving me the opportunity in times gone by to get used to examiners watching one whilst at work. Only a comparatively short time before, at an exhibition held close to London, I had gained a first and second prize. This, and similar experiences together with the added experience of working in three shops with sighted basket-makers and under all kinds of conditions, stood me in good stead on this day; for, as you must know, it is a most difficult thing to maintain a true state of balance whenever we are working under abnormal circumstances.

From the moment I had completed my first basket, my name was made so far as the four candidates were concerned and I was treated as an equal by them. I had not doubted that this would happen, for I have always found it to be the case in my dealings with the seeing world, that if we people put a good face on life and evince a willingness to help ourselves, help is always forthcoming. Maybe a practical basket-maker will read this account of my experiences, in which case he will be interested to know that the baskets which I made in the six hours were a close randed, flat-top luncheon, and an oval flasket 14 inch. This will show him that my speed was not in any sense slow, especially when it is remembered that the work was done in a new shop and for exhibition purposes.

On October 18th, for one hour, I had to demonstrate my ability as an instructor to three specially selected pupils, differing in make-up, and at varying stages of advancement in their trade. One was a young man of 21 years, rather well on in his trade; another, 17 years, just beginning and rather simple; the third, totally blind, and totally deaf, which meant that all instruction must be given by means of the deaf-dumb manual. The test was not merely my ability to impart correct instruction, but how I utilised my time between the three. This, of course, meant that I had to take in as quickly as possible the

varying types, decide on my method of approach to each, and visualise as far as it was possible how much or how little time I could devote to each. After a slight attack of nerves I completely forgot the existence of examiners, for my heart was wrapped up in this work of teaching; and although my throat was extremely dry at the end of the hour, this time spent with the lads was the happiest of all.

A vigorous pat on the back and a hearty handshake told me the test was over, and the next day found me back at work in the shop as if nothing extraordinary had happened. In a few days I learned unofficially that I had passed, and in due course the signed Diploma came along, together with a letter of special commendation.

I cannot conclude this experience without offering a word of thanks to those responsible for the arrangements during the three days. The examination was not in any sense a captious affair; if one had ability, one had opportunity to demonstrate it.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Accuracy of Blind Workers.

SIR,—The following experience may be of interest to your readers. We were recently asked to deal in our Mechanical Department with a job of inspection and gauging of small collars and half-collars for bomb fuses, diam. 5/16ths inch. We dealt with 4,000 in the first place, and, as a test passed them back, after rejecting faults, directly from our blind workers to the factory concerned for re-examination without the intervention of our sighted Supervisor. They were re-examined, and not a single one was rejected.

We wished to test the accuracy of our workers on this unusually delicate job, and the result was extremely gratifying.

Yours, etc.,

H. S. EDKINS, *General Supt. & Sec.*

Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind.

Lessons In Braille.

To the Editor.

SIR,—May I make a suggestion? Would it be possible for THE NEW BEACON to teach Braille in inkprint to its readers, just a dozen lessons to get the idea of how Braille is taught by postal correspondence?

This would be a good way to help the war-time study group to learn to help others in need.

Yours, etc., V. W. SUSSEX.

FORD'S PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED WORKERS

AN American correspondent supplies us with the following information provided by Mr. Edsel Ford, son of Mr. Henry Ford, of Detroit fame:—

“A good many firms in this country (America) have always known that individuals impaired physically in some respect frequently have perfectly adequate capabilities for some jobs. Now, under the prompting of a man-power pinch, recognition of the usefulness of the physically handicapped is spreading to all the country's industries and services.

“Our company is one of those which have for a long time believed in and practised the utilisation of physically impaired workers. To-day we employ 1,208 totally or partially blind men; 111 of our employees are deaf mutes. There are, in addition, 135 who suffer from epilepsy; 91 with but one arm; 3 with both arms amputated; 260 with one arm crippled; 157 with one leg amputated; 101 others suffering from crippled conditions of the legs; 10 with both legs amputated; 139 with spine curvatures; 322 with organic heart ailments. All together, 11,163 men in various stages of disability are receiving full pay. The blind men

receive from 95 cents to \$1.15 an hour. These figures are for the River Rouge industrial area. One of the sightless men has been with the company 24 years, and is now 74.

“No company regards such employment as charity or altruism. All our handicapped workers give full value for their wages and their tasks are carried out with absolutely no allowances or special considerations. Our real assistance to them has been merely the discovery of tasks which would develop their usefulness. Their fellow-workers are highly co-operative.”

“The foregoing facts,” says Mr. Ben Purse, “furnish a complete answer to those employers who for various reasons have hesitated to provide facilities in their respective undertakings for the occupation of blind and other disabled people. If any of the main recommendations in the Tomlinson Report find expression in a statutory enactment, it would not be unreasonable to ask for the institution of a quota system in which all large industrial undertakings might share the responsibility of providing employment for a limited number of physically handicapped men and women.”

PERSONALIA

It was with real regret that the Home Teaching Staff and her many blind friends in Gloucestershire heard of the resignation of their Secretary, MRS. M. A. PAYNE. Mrs. Payne was appointed as home teacher in 1933, and became County Secretary in 1936, and during these ten years she has gained the true affection and trust of all who came under her care. She will certainly be very much missed, as she has never spared herself in her efforts to help and improve conditions for the blind. Fortunately she is not leaving the County, and all will look forward to seeing her.

* * *

The Rev. A. WELLESLEY ORR, Vicar of St. Paul's, Kingston Hill, and Editor of the *Moon Messenger*, the religious monthly in Moon type, was recently presented with a cheque for £500 on behalf of 500 subscribers upon his completion of 20 years' service in the town and district. The subscribers included units such as the Mess of the East Surrey Regiment, the Band Boys of the Regiment, the Kingston Police, the Steadfast Sea Cadet Corps and the

R.A.O.B. The response was a remarkable personal tribute to the Vicar.

* * *

MR. GEORGE O'NEILL is shortly leaving St. Helens, where he has been Secretary of the Blind Welfare Society since 1933. He has been re-appointed Superintendent of the Wigan, Leigh and District Workshops for the Blind, a position he held very successfully for five years prior to his appointment at St. Helens.

* * *

Last month an opal ring and a handbag with a sum of money were presented to Miss THOMSON, teacher of the blind in the counties of Perth and Kinross, on the occasion of her retirement. Miss Thomson's father was appointed Superintendent of the Perth Society for Teaching the Blind in 1878, retiring in 1930, and Miss Thomson was appointed assistant in 1921, superintendent in 1930, and retiring this year completed 22 years' service. Thus father and daughter served the Society for 65 years. The presentation was arranged by the blind themselves.

THE PROGRESS OF BLIND WELFARE

WHEN war broke out in 1939 most people would have supposed that the period of its duration would be a time of little if any progress in the general welfare of the blind. But in several directions the reverse has been the case. The need for skilled handicraftsmanship of all kinds in munitions and aircraft factories has at long last overcome much of the prejudice against the employment of blind alongside sighted labour; the stress and sacrifice of war have awakened the nation to an enlightened attitude towards social service, and the measures projected in such surveys as the Beveridge and Tomlinson Reports open prospects of self-help and independence to the handicapped and disabled which, in 1939, were not in sight; the national schemes for the war-blinded have drawn attention to, and incidentally provided means for, the rehabilitation and more precise training of people who lose their sight in adult life; the war-time shiftings and groupings of whole sections of the population have revealed the crying need for increasing the standards and scope of education and those responsible for the education of the blind have shown their readiness and ability to march in step with the general forward movement; the country's extreme need for the full service of every able-bodied citizen, coupled with the constant drain on its man-power, has strengthened the sight-saving campaign by underlining its vast national importance.

One of the main reasons for this general progress of Blind Welfare in time of war has been the spirit and attitude of the blind themselves. The blind community has been not a whit behind the sighted community in its devotion to the country during its struggle for existence. Denied by destiny the ability to fight the foe physically, they have come forward, men and women in their thousands, to offer the power of their minds and the skill of their hands to the nation's, the Empire's, civilization's cause. From old ladies in their eighties, who knit almost day and night to provide comforts for the troops, and the poor, who scrape together their pence as a voluntary contribution to the national finances, to the vigorous workers toiling overtime in their own workshops or in the war factories, the blind have shown their passionate desire and ability to serve. Their selflessness in so doing may well be rewarded in the future by a result of really immense importance to the blind generally. Their war-time reactions, essentially natural and normal, are creating the intimate contacts between blind and sighted which alone can dissolve the strange ignorance, in those only casually in contact, of each other's mental and emotional processes, and it is probable that the psychological misunderstandings which still exist between sighted and sightless will eventually be entirely eliminated. When peace once more folds its wings over the peoples of the earth, the sighted can no longer regard the blind mistakenly, if kindly, as objects of patronage; the blind can no longer regard the sighted mistakenly, if gratefully, as objects of suspicion; for have not both alike been "comrades-in-arms" in the great Battle of the World?

LIFE SAVING AWARDS TO THE BLIND

We owe an apology to blind swimmers for a mis-statement which crept into our issue for April 15th. The success of a blind boy in gaining the Royal Life Saving Society's Certificate was described as a rare achievement, whereas, of course, there have been many blind boys and girls and young people who have won the Society's Certificate and Bronze and Silver Medallions. Instances were given by correspondents in last month's issue of this journal, and only a year ago eight Worcester College boys gained the Intermediate Certificate and six boys the Bronze Medallion; Worcester College, with sixteen awards, coming eighth in a list of fifteen Boys' Higher Schools entering for the examinations. This is somewhat of an achievement for a blind boys' school when we compare it with, say, Rugby's eleven awards in the same series of tests. It should also be noted that for many years the National Institute's Braille edition of the Royal Life Saving Society's Handbook of Instruction in the rescue of the drowning has been available to blind swimmers.

THE EDITOR

RECENT STATISTICS—III

By BEN PURSE

SO far as we have been able to proceed with our statistical calculations it has been possible to describe a situation which could not in any degree whatever be regarded as satisfactory. Fortunately for all concerned, however, the appointment of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Welfare of the Blind, and subsequently that of the Advisory Committee, with the enactment of 1920, has provided a basis for activities which have continued with ever-increasing momentum. In our last article it was necessary to discuss the facts and figures recorded in the census returns from 1851 to 1911. We stated that these statistics could not be relied upon and that they served merely an historical purpose. Much detail was lacking, and where attempts were made to fill in deficiencies they were so obviously unreliable that even the Registrar-General was called upon to make certain explanations in order to dispose of statements that were given in the records, and which were wholly inconsistent with the limitations of blindness.

The Inter-Departmental Committee during its deliberations recognised this state of things and felt impelled to make certain recommendations that were so designed as to prevent their being repeated in official documents. The more recent figures that have been made available, whilst not being entirely satisfactory, are free from the blemishes and the defects which characterise the old census returns, and it is possible therefore to vouch for the accuracy of most of the statistics given in recent times. For example, the first report of the Advisory Committee, 1918-19, is a document that was drawn with very great care, and although central registration was only beginning to be recognised as an essential activity in blind welfare services, it is clear that a sensible commencement had been made.

At March 31st, 1919, the blind population numbered 25,840. The age periods beyond 16 were not then specified, but we are told in the report that the number of children from 0—5 years of age was 219, and the relevant figure from 5—16 was stated to be 2,098. The number of blind persons employed in all occupations was stated to be 6,391. The classification is an interesting one:—

Agents, collectors, etc.	..	..	..	184
Basket and cane workers	..	..	..	1,320
Beggars	..	..	..	85

Boot repairers	..	..	..	..	132
Brush makers	..	..	..	..	375
Carpenters	..	..	..	..	17
Clergymen	..	..	..	..	24
Knitters	..	..	..	..	720
Massage	..	..	..	..	66
Mat makers	..	..	..	..	329
Tea agents and general dealers	..	..	..	..	250
Musicians	..	..	..	..	464
Tuners	..	..	..	..	317
Schoolmasters	..	..	..	..	91
Miscellaneous	..	..	..	..	944

We have not thought it necessary to specify every occupation included in the list set forth in the report, for it is certain that the figures given and the designations assigned to some of them, to say the least of it, are misleading. We should never under present conditions recognise the professional beggar as belonging to a legitimate occupation, and this denomination is not to be found in subsequent records. Our object has been simply to provide examples of classifications that were originally enumerated, so that if an attempt is made to calculate the figures given in the table recorded here, it will be found that the numbers fall far short of the original total, viz., 6,391.

The eighth report of the Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind furnishes yet another example of a more exact classification of statistics. At March 31st, 1929, the blind population of England and Wales was given as 52,727—males, 26,515; females, 26,212. The number of children aged 0—5 was 258; 5—16, 2,438; thus the number over 16 years of age was 50,031. The employment figures are of considerable interest when contrasted with those already recorded. We specify some of the categories as follows:—

Agents, collectors, etc.	..	..	..	230
Basket and cane workers	..	..	..	1,958
Boot repairers, brushmakers and carpenters	..	..	..	903
Clergymen	..	..	..	50
Clerks, typists and telephone operators	..	..	..	195
Knitters	..	..	..	1,066
Dealers, agents and shopkeepers	..	..	..	719
Pianoforte tuners	..	..	..	569

The total number employed in all categories was 9,548.

In order to complete this statistical survey, reference must be made to the figures contained in the various reports for 1941-42. They represent a more exact appreciation of social and industrial conditions as we now find them, but the next publication of employment figures will most certainly show substantial progress and

will reveal the fact that the expenditure that is now being incurred by local authorities will be influenced to a considerable extent by a diminution in the number of unemployables, which is a situation all to the good and one which we must be mindful to maintain in post-war years.

At March 31st, 1942, the blind population of England and Wales was given as 75,306. The age periods were recorded in the first article of this series, and we do not propose, therefore, to repeat them here, but merely to refer to the employment position. The total number of employed persons was said to be 7,713, made up as follows: Workshop employees, 3,415; home workers, 1,640; all other occupations, 2,653. Within recent years it has been found necessary to regard the category of employment as being

one which should only include those who are engaged in worth-while occupations where the economic results place the worker outside the pursuits that rank as being pastime occupations. This has been an eminently wise course of procedure, for it enables us to see more clearly the problem of employment in its true relationship to the total blind population. It is an indication of the appreciable distance we have yet to travel before we are able to say in very truth that no blind man or woman in the community who is capable of performing useful work is denied the opportunity of contributing towards their own maintenance by the performance of those services which are essential to the life of the community and without which the status of citizenship cannot be sustained.

“SEEKING THE BUBBLE”

A Review by M. G. THOMAS.

THE name of Esmond Knight, author of *Seeking the Bubble* (Hutchinson, 15s.), is familiar to wireless listeners everywhere, and known to many theatre-goers. He lost his sight when serving on the *Prince of Wales*, but only the last chapters of his book deal with his experiences as a naval officer. The rest is the story of boyhood, of student days and of life as an actor: it is vital, exciting, lit with humour and shot through with those cunning phrases that make a narrative live.

It is a remarkable book for a man to have written less than three years after a blow that must at the time have shattered all his hopes, for there is no hint of self-pity in its pages, and the closing words are ones that look forward: “A New Theatre. That’s what must come out of the war when the shouting is over . . . the theatre must be a vital part of the Renaissance, both spiritual and cultural. . . . Let there be an international exchange in the theatre that will help permanently to bind the peoples of all the earth.” The chapter is fitly headed with those two lovely lines of the morning:—

“Night’s candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.”

Several pages in a well-known Theatrical Year-Book are given up to the family trees of actors, showing how acting is “in the blood,” and reappears in generation after generation. Esmond Knight’s maternal great grandmother was a singer of great promise, and at the age of seventeen was “hailed as a prodigy and the darling of London,” but just when she seemed to

be on the brink of a brilliant career she was wooed and won by a passionate but jealous pork-butcher, and domesticity ousted art for ever. One of her sons (Esmond Knight’s grandfather) was a potter, a writer of plays and books, the friend of Irving and Tree. Another son was an artist. Bertha, Esmond Knight’s mother, early showed talent as pianist and singer, and wanted to become an actress, but her father discouraged the idea. They made their home in Paris, but Bertha often visited England, and here met Hugh Knight, the man she married. In the first chapter of *Seeking the Bubble* the Knight family is vividly portrayed: there was great grandfather William, who “earned a precarious living by giving lessons in drawing and painting to the young ladies and gentlemen of the great houses in the neighbourhood”: John Buxton Knight, his son, who became a painter, and (like some Stanley Spencer of an earlier generation) “at a meeting of the smug Academicians . . . proceeded to tell them without mincing words exactly what he thought of them”: and Hugh himself with his brothers and sisters (Mabel, Frank, Janet, Charles, Isabel and Winifred) who, with their parents, took part in musical and theatrical evenings, when the local plasterer, the plumber and a noted London surgeon augmented the family orchestra. There is material in these first pages of the book to make a full length family chronicle, and one longs for more.

Esmond Knight is one of a family of four sons, and was only a preparatory school boy on Armistice Day, 1918, and “soon forgot the war.” He and his brothers went to Westminster, and what more suitable setting could there have

been for a schoolboy who soon convinced himself that in another life he had been an Elizabethan? He tells us that Westminster has produced more actors than any other public school, and it is hardly surprising, for it is set within the coloured pageantry of English history, and its walls must echo still with the sound of kings, statesmen and Benedictine monks long dead.

School was followed by work as a student under Lilian Baylis at the Old Vic, and a very modest part in *The Merchant of Venice*. Then came other plays, a tour with the Birmingham Repertory Company in *Yellow Sands*, marriage, success and failure, a time in Paris, broadcasting from the prehistoric studios on Savoy Hill, with hawking on the Kentish marshes as a diversion. Some of the most interesting pages of *Seeking the Bubble* tell of Esmond Knight's time in Germany when he had a part in a German film with Lilian Harvey as lead. Already severe anti-Jewish restrictions were in force, and the writer describes how he once visited a restaurant with Jewish friends on a night when the evening papers had published new and brutal measures taken against the Jews. One of his companions suddenly hurled his glass to the floor, crying "To hell with the Nazis!" The cry was taken up, and glasses thrown on the ground in hysteric fury, while the harassed Jewish manager tried to drown the demonstration by calling upon the orchestra to strike up.

A chance encounter with Hitler Youth, marching through the streets and singing the Horst Wessel song, "with set expressions and a fanatical light in the eyes," the drone of aircraft all night long, glimpses of a film director who carried a small whip "with which he would flick the intimidated film extras"—all these were ugly signs of the times, that must have contrasted oddly with the beauty of medieval streets and the fifteenth century buildings of the old quarter of Hamburg.

The shadows grew darker, and then came Munich, a year of uncertain peace, the invasion of Poland, a brief respite for Knight on holiday in Cornwall and the Scillies, the fall of France, air-raids, a part in *This England* (with a line "I wish before heaven that Master Francis Drake would send me aboard and into battle") as he waited impatiently for the summons to train as an R.N.V.R. officer: and then—the long-awaited letter. Training, an appointment to the newly built *Prince of Wales*, "and one fine morning we were gliding under our own steam down the Mersey and into the open sea."

Then follows the story of the *Prince of Wales* being ordered to sea in pursuit of the *Bismarck* and *Prinz Eugen* in the Denmark Straits, of

Action Stations, the sinking of the *Hood*, and—for the writer—oblivion. He was taken to hospital in Iceland, and then, after some months, sent home. In half a dozen pages he tells of his time of training at St Dunstan's, and pays a warm tribute to Sir Ian Fraser:—"As I listened to him talking in his quiet concise way, I soon began to realise that here was a man who spoke the best common sense and logic to which I had ever listened. Some of us disagreed at first with the advice he offered us so gently, but in the end we had to admit that here was one who knew, who had been through all our kindergarten and teething troubles so long ago, who, through the years, had evolved a wise well-balanced philosophy of his own, and his were words to keep."

A visit to the Green Room Club, and Esmond Knight "was swept back into the world of the theatre again." Life had begun afresh and the book ends on a note of hope. Through wartime mists he sees the outlines of the theatre of the future and the work to be done by lovers of art to achieve it. "Action Stations!"

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blind Woman Organist's Bigger Appointment.

—Miss M. Elaine Hett, A.R.C.M., Organist and Choirmistress at St. Michael's Church, Hulme Walfield, Congleton, Cheshire, has been appointed to a much bigger job as Organist and Choirmistress at St. Andrew's Church, Coulsdon, Surrey. She takes up her new appointment in July.

Sinclair Logan, Mus. Bac.—Once again we have pleasure in announcing a further achievement by Mr. Sinclair Logan, who at the end of June had conferred upon him by the University of Durham the Degree of Mus. Bac. That he should have had time to study in preparing for a major examination, while carrying out his normal duties as Director of Music to two schools and fulfilling all his broadcast engagements, excites admiration and wonder. Such untiring energy deserves the success attained. Under like circumstances two years ago, he gained the F.R.C.O. Diploma, the ambitious goal of every organist. Students who have the privilege of receiving instruction from such an accomplished and capable teacher as Mr. Logan are to be envied.

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION”

By W. H. COATES

VI.—The Public (I)

FROM the University Tom went out to encounter the great British Public. He took his social problems with him, and was soon confronted with additional ones. He found that the world did not demand quite so rigid a conformity to its approved patterns; but compliance was now more expedient. Compliance improved one's chances of getting and keeping a job—now an urgent necessity. He felt the constraint more rather than less. He must cramp himself and falsify himself, not only for the sake of fellowship, but for the sake of a salary too. Suppose he steadily refused to wear gloves when gloves were fashionable; suppose he shovelled up peas with a spoon in a restaurant as he sometimes did at home; suppose he moved gingerly about a lady's drawing-room because her cat was sleeping on the floor somewhere, but he didn't know just where; suppose the colours of his tie clashed with those of his shirt—such trifles would weigh against him in the minds of his fellows and of possible employers. If he stopped in the park to listen to a bird, or left the path to examine a tree, someone would immediately come and ask if he had lost his way. These things could only be done by stealth, as if they were too shameful for the public gaze. He must walk meekly along the road, swerving neither to the right nor the left, itching all the time to be poking about those hedges and ditches not ten yards away.

What was to be done? Was there no solution of the problem?

The only hope that he could see lay in educating the public. A big job certainly, but he knew something of what propaganda could do (and we nowadays know a little more). Tom's species of propaganda would be a novel one. It would be the truth. It would be the truth about blind people, their ways and their wants.

The attitude of the public Tom, like many another, called deplorable. Everywhere he found strong feeling coupled with slight knowledge. Everybody felt sympathetic, but very few knew clearly what they were sympathising with, or what the blind would ask of them.

The proportion of blind people to the general population is very small. Of those who go about alone it is smaller still. Many people must be unfamiliar with the sight of a blind man alone in the street: many have never spoken to one

in their lives. What have they to go on in guessing the nature of these animals?

Very little. Some may have noticed newspaper paragraphs about blind boys and girls who have won prizes or passed exams. Others may have taken part in whist-drives in aid of the blind. Some too may have heard appeals for money which depicted the blind as suffering a cruel affliction and a severe handicap: even as helpless beggars groping miserably for consolation in a pitch-black world; which went on to say how much money was needed to train them for some occupation and make their lives tolerable; which finally foreshadowed what marvels could be achieved when the money was forthcoming.

Beyond this they have only imagination to guide them: and imagination can only be kept within the pale of truth by facts. They shut their eyes for five minutes and then say; “Now I know what it's like to be blind.” They could not make a greater mistake, of course. When they see a picture of blind babies at play, they say in surprise, “Poor darlings! they look quite happy.” A film of a blind crew rowing a boat evokes the exclamation—“fancy—how wonderful!” as though they were witnessing the antics of beings from the Moon.

From the mass of misconception two ideas crystallise out in their minds; First, “The blind are helpless, unhappy creatures”; second, “The blind are marvellous”: a combined attack of pity and wonder will breach the toughest purse, so the blind are loaded with humiliation and embarrassment and gold.

These were the two emotions which continually cropped up along Tom's path. If he boarded a bus, some woman would be sure to say in a loud voice; “poor fellow . . . how dreadful!” The remark always struck him as singularly inappropriate to the occasion. After he had mounted the vehicle in good style, had found a seat and paid his fare without a hitch, “poor fellow” seemed to miss the mark. If he had stumbled and bumped his knee: trodden on ladies' corns, flopped into some one's lap for a seat, and then offered a half-crown and a penny to one of the passengers instead of twopence to the conductor; then “poor fellow” might be justified.

And why did they always shout it so, as if to make sure of his hearing it?

The phrase which rivalled "poor fellow" in frequency was "wonderful— isn't it!" Under such an appraisal you felt like a rare museum specimen in a glass case—something come from foreign parts for the idly curious to stare at. Or like a monkey trained to smoke a cigarette, or a conjuror performing the oddest tricks in the

world. (Perhaps you would send the hat round afterwards.)

But as for thinking of you as an ordinary human being with ordinary business to attend to—— What an idea!!!

(To be continued)

THE ELDERLY BLIND: WHAT CAN THEY DO?

By A. E. BAWTREE, F.R.P.S.

III. Work in Glass and Metal.

FROM things done in the garden it is an easy transition to garden frames, cloches, greenhouses and house windows, for all of which the handling of glass is required. The one fundamental qualification for this work is to be able to cut glass, but for this a costly diamond is not necessary. I have, for preference, used the ordinary little sixpenny wheel glass-cutter for thousands of cuts, made with great accuracy. I am able to do this without the aid of sight, as for many years I did it in total darkness, for I was cutting up sensitive photographic plates. The prime condition when buying a glass-cutter is to see that it really cuts. Take a piece of fairly thick glass to the shop and refuse a cutter which the shopman cannot induce to cut clean, straight breaks.

The next thing is to learn to use the cutter yourself. Before trying the cutter I recommend making the cutting board, as this makes the use of the glass-cutter much easier. A small, perfectly flat board, such as an artist's drawing board, or a domestic pastry board, or mint chopping board, is necessary; a suitable size is 12 inches by 9. Obtain from a printer two 1-foot lengths of the flat wood known as pica furniture; it is of oak, about $\frac{5}{8}$ inch wide by $\frac{3}{16}$ inch thick. Nail or glue, or both, a piece of this along one shorter side of the board. At one end of a 1-foot piece glue a 1-inch piece, lying parallel with the 1-foot length. The 9-inch side with its strip forms the bottom of the board. Adjusting the long piece so that it just reaches the top of the board, nail the other end through the front pica strip and with its right-hand side about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch from the right-hand side of the board. With the help of a carpenter's square, adjust the long strip exactly at right angles to the bottom strip and then nail or screw the top end of the long strip down to the board. This strip will now lie a pica thickness above the board, spaced from it at either end. The glass

to be cut is slipped under this strip and right home against the bottom pica strip. The right-hand side of the long strip forms the cutting ruler and will give cuts perfectly at right angles to the bottom edge of the glass.

As glass-cutting depends entirely upon touch and sound, people who cannot see are specially suited to do it. The cut should sound clean and almost musical and free from all grinding like wheels upon gravel. Great pressure is not needed, indeed will give inferior cuts. Above all, never go over the same cut twice. Doing so will destroy any cutter, either of wheel or diamond.

Abundant and cheap supplies of glass are obtainable from small professional photographers, whom I have found eager to sell their old negatives at 1s. a dozen, whole-plate size; that is, $8\frac{1}{2}$ inches by $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches. Half-plates cost 6d. a dozen, and quarter-plates 3d. a dozen. The films are removed by soaking the plates overnight in a solution of washing soda and then scrubbing off with a stiff brush. It is easy to feel when and where the film is removed. I have just finished the glazing of a large light for a garden frame with half-plates, laid in rebated strips of wood and overlapping one another as slates do on a house roof.

I am in great demand for framing photos and pictures in *passe-partout*. To cut the glass to the exact size of the card, adjust the card on top of the glass flush with the left-hand side and bottom. Slip both under the guide-rule till the edge of the card can just be felt projecting beyond the rule. Without shifting the glass, remove the card, when the cut should come in just the right place. Pieces of card of any shape can be cut in this way by first making a cardboard model and then cutting to it.

For metal-working, one or two tools are essential, but to-day, thanks to Woolworth's, there can be very few people like the old-

fashioned maiden ladies who used to knock in tacks with the knob of a poker. A hammer will be required and a pair of compasses. I still always use a pair which I was given more than fifty years ago in a toy box of tools. Pliers and a file are required, also some means of making holes. A simple spike will do for many purposes; it is driven through the metal down into a piece of wood, then the burr which is raised is filed off. A clamp opening, say, to 4 inches, is needed. Possibly the domestic mincing machine, marmalade-cutter or wringer can furnish this; if not, it must be bought. A vice is made by clamping two pieces of wood or metal together with the work placed between them. For an anvil, nothing is better than the body of an old laundry iron with the superstructure removed, so that it lies down flat when upside down. This can usually be bought for a few pence at a rag-and-bone shop. A pair of tinman's "snips," that is to say, strong scissors or shears will be required. If possible, a hacksaw should be obtained, though, with much extra labour, metal can be cut through with a triangular file.

I have kept my family and friends supplied with small saucepans. The bodies are empty fruit or salmon tins, the tops of which were cut with the wheel tin opener, which leaves neat edges.

The handle consists of a piece of tin 3 inches square, rolled into a tube $\frac{3}{4}$ inch in diameter. One end of this is fixed to a round piece of wood for the handle, by driving a 1-inch nail right through tin and wood and hammering down the projecting end of the nail on the anvil. The remainder of the tube is hammered flat, bent nearly at right angles, and has three holes punched through it. Corresponding holes are punched through the side of the tin can, stiffening the can by a piece of wood inside it. The handle may then be fastened to the can by wire, or, much better, by rivets, cut from nails. To rivet the handle on, the can must be flattened so as to fit down with the anvil inside it. The rivet is inserted from inside the can, the nail head resting on the anvil. The tail of the rivet, projecting above the handle, is then hammered down. The can may easily be bent to shape again when the handle is fixed.

The chief material used will be tin, made from opening out tin cans. The variety of work which can be done is so great that it is not possible to deal with it here, but when you have once mastered the use of tools, you will find yourself constantly in demand for minor household repairs. For instance, coal hods, garden tools, shovels and hinges of doors and boxes are often coming under my hand.

Of course the more tools you have the wider will be your range, and I do not think that, if funds permit, you will rest long before being able to drill thick metal and cut screws.

Handiness with glass and metal gives one self-respect and the feeling of really fulfilling a useful part in the household.

(To be continued)

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Empire

Royal Victorian Institute, Melbourne.—With the Report for 1942 this Institute has completed three-quarters of a century of work for the blind and, in spite of the inevitable difficulties of war, time conditions, there is a fine record of achievement. Money collected reached a sum of nearly £10,000 (over £700 more than any previous year), while sales for the year totalled over £65,000, and made another record. Children in the Institute's school department raised over £120 for the Red Cross, and made a large number of knitted garments, the workmanship of which was highly praised by those in authority; a new class for partially sighted children has completed its first year's work; the Blind People's Social Club has adopted a ship and sent £50 worth of books and cigarettes to her company; blind workers have taken a course in First Aid; a beginning has been made in placing the blind and partially sighted in war factories. In all its departments the Institute shows a vitality which promises well for the last twenty-five years before its centenary is accomplished.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the death of:

Miss Lydia Hayes, for many years chief executive officer of the New Jersey State Commission for the Blind, and a pioneer in blind welfare work in the States. She was blinded in early childhood and educated at Perkins Institution, during the directorship of Michael Anagnos. After training at the Boston Kindergarten Normal School, she taught seeing children for a

time, then worked as a volunteer home teacher in Boston, and later as the recognised home teacher under the State Board of Education in Massachusetts until her appointment to the New Jersey State Commission post in 1909. She summed up the "rights of the Blind," as the right to health, to education, to work and to service.

Frederick Hendries, of Walworth, aged 63, well known in former years as musical director at many of London's leading theatres. At the height of his career he was struck blind by a stone carelessly thrown by a child. Despite this he rapidly became an accomplished pianist and played at many children's shows, including the Southwark Young Britons. He was one of the only two blind men to be awarded the W.V.S. Civil Defence Badge for work in providing troop comforts. Since the outbreak of war he devoted all his time to supplying comforts and constructed a machine of his own design to wind wool.

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19036	Lemarr, B., and Williams, S. Shoe Shine Gal, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
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- Bairstow, E. C. Communion Service in E flat (600).
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- Holst, Gustav (arr. by). Let all Mortal Flesh Keep Silence (Chorus) (599).

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- Mendelssohn. Sonata in E, Op. 6 (596).
- Schubert :
 - Sonata No. 2 in D, Op. 53 (edited by Franklin Taylor) (597).
 - Sonata No. 5 in A minor, Op. 143 (edited by Franklin Taylor) (598).

Theory and Music Literature :

- Scholes, Percy. Oxford Companion to Music, Selected Articles from, ed. by H. V. Spanner :
 - The Organ and Reed Organ Family, 3 vols. (591-593).
 - Lyrical and Dance Forms in Pianoforte Music (594).
 - The Pianoforte (595).

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31st May, 1943.**

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies.
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Northampton ..	—
Bloomfield, Leamington ..	—
Wavertree House, Hove ..	—
The Haven, Scarborough ..	—
Fair Lawn, Totteridge (for convalescence or short periods of rest) ..	6
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate ..	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea ..	—
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring ..	—
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay ..	5
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth ..	4

JEWISH BRAILLE REVIEW THIRD LITERARY COMPETITION.

Poetry Section. Prizes of 25, 15, and 10 dollars are offered to blind competitors for the best poems, not exceeding 32 lines in length, on any subject. Three poems may be submitted, if the competitor wishes.

Prose Section. Similar prizes are offered for essays (3,000-4,000 words in length) giving an account of the writer's "adjustment to blindness." Such essays should be written in relation to the writer's own impact with the problem of blindness, under one of the following heads: (1) Blindness at birth or soon after. (2) Blindness in early childhood. (3) In adolescence. (4) In adult life before the age of 40. (5) After 40. (6) Blindness and deafness. (7) War-blindness.

Rules. Entries must reach the Editor, *Jewish Braille Review*, 1825, Harrison Avenue, New York, U.S.A., not later than September 15th, 1943, and should if possible be type-written. If this is impossible, Braille manuscripts will be accepted. They must be signed by pen-name only, and former competitors are asked to choose a new pen-name. Manuscripts will not be returned, unless a special request is made.

Announcement of awards will be made in December issue of *Jewish Braille Review* and later in other Braille periodicals. In addition to the cash prizes, the Helen Keller gold medal will be awarded to the first-prize winner in the prose section.

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

Notice to Advertisers.

As war conditions occasionally cause unavoidable delay in production and publication, advertisers are advised to make the closing date for receipt of applications not earlier than the 1st of the month following date of issue.

Sighted female **HOME TEACHER** for town area. State age and experience. Salary according to qualifications. Apply Secretary, South Beds Blind Centre, Williamson Street, Luton.

THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND: PASTIME OCCUPATIONS COMPETITION.

A prize of £1 1s. is offered in each of the following three classes to Home Teachers in the Southern Regional area (whether participating in the forthcoming Refresher Course at Brentwood or not) who:

1. Submit an article demonstrating a new pastime occupation or the development of an already existing pastime occupation.
2. Submit an article in which the cost of materials is negligible.
3. Submit a written scheme for some communal activity, which need not be a handicraft (e.g., it may take the form of a game or competition), or submit an article which can be made by co-operative effort.

Special credit will be given to entries made with materials that are fairly easily procurable in war-time.

Entries, marked on the outside "Pastime Occupation Competition," to reach the Secretary, Southern Regional Association for the Blind, c/o The County High School, Brentwood, not later than the 23rd August. Competitors may enter for any one, or all, classes.

WEST OF ENGLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND, EXETER.

APPOINTMENT OF HEADMASTER-SUPER- INTENDENT AND MATRON

The Committee invite applications for the posts of Headmaster-Superintendent and Matron. They would prefer to make a joint appointment of man and wife, but would consider applications for the two posts separately.

The Institution provides education, technical training and employment for 120 blind and partially sighted children and adults in school and workshops.

The Headmaster-Superintendent should be a trained and experienced schoolmaster, with good administrative ability. Previous experience in teaching the blind is not essential.

Salary, £400 rising by annual increments of £10 to £500 per annum, together with free quarters, board and ordinary medical attendance.

The Matron should be qualified to direct all the domestic arrangements of the Institution.

Salary, £150 rising by annual increments of £5 to £200 per annum, together with free quarters, board and ordinary medical attendance.

Duties will commence at a convenient date in the Autumn Term.

Further information may be obtained from the Secretary, at the Institution, to whom applications, supported by recent testimonials and names of references, should be sent by 1st July next.

FOR SALE. Harrison Treadle Overlocking Machine. Binds, cuts and sews, and is in absolutely perfect condition. Price 12 guineas, carriage paid. Apply, The Secretary, Warrington, Widnes and District Society for the Blind, 4, Museum Street, Warrington.

BLIND WELFARE SERVICE. Those aspiring to hold appointments as Home Visitors of the Blind are invited to send for details of a Scheme designed to assist students to obtain necessary Diploma. Apply (enclosing stamp) to: H. N. Vickerstaff, Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17.

ASSISTANT MISTRESS REQUIRED for September for Court Grange, Abbotskerswell, Devon, a boarding school for retarded blind boys and girls aged 7 to 16 years. (Recognised by the Board of Education.) Burnham Scale, Elementary II, with special school increment and increment for Diploma of College of Teachers of the Blind. Resident or Non-resident. Applications are invited from teachers with qualifications and experience in teaching retarded children; previous experience with blind children not essential. Application forms from Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

REQUIRED URGENTLY. HOME TEACHER (sighted woman) for rural area away from coast. Preference given to applicants possessing Home Teacher's Certificate and able to provide own car (running expenses refunded). Salary according to experience, maximum £200 plus war bonus of 7½ per cent. The appointment is permanent, and subject to medical evidence of good health, and participation in the Association's Superannuation Scheme.

Apply in own handwriting, with details of age and experience, and copies of two recent testimonials, to the Organising Secretary, The East Sussex Association for the Blind, 165, High Street, Lewes.

CITY OF BRADFORD ROYAL INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

Appointment of Woman Home Teacher-Visitor (Sighted).

Applications are invited for the position of Home Teacher in the Blind Persons Department.

Candidates should be experienced and be able to give instruction in reading raised types and in simple pastime handicrafts. They should possess the Home Teachers' Certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind.

The Salary will be in accordance with *Grade F2* of the Corporation's Salary and Grading Scheme, which is £160 *per annum* rising by annual increments of £10 to a maximum of £190 per annum, together with a war bonus which is at present £26 per annum. The appointment will be made at the *minimum salary* of the Grade. The successful candidate will be required to contribute to the Local Government and other Officers Superannuation Act, and to pass a medical examination.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, together with copies of two recent testimonials, should be received by me, endorsed "Home Teacher—Royal Institution for the Blind," on or before 5th July, 1943.

N. L. FLEMING, Town Clerk.
Town Hall, Bradford.

The New BEACON

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 319.

JULY 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE TOMLINSON REPORT—I

By R. TATLOW

THIS Report displays courage, imagination and optimism, and expresses, I think, much of what has been for a long while in the minds of many people. We recall, for example, the attempt made in Germany from 1923 to 1933 to put into practice the compulsory quota now recommended. In pre-war Japan there existed, at one time, a law reserving to the blind the right to practise massage; whether it naturally lapsed into disregard or was deliberately rescinded, it would be instructive to know.

It is interesting to mark the emphasis placed by the Report upon a distinction between the "surgically" and the "medically" disabled. To follow up this line should lead to enlightenment, and perhaps to the advantage of some often-misunderstood cases of disability. There are such cases among blind people in particular, and there must be similar ones among other categories of disablement. The blind come into the category of the "surgically disabled." Here, however, sometimes may appear a third kind of disability (unless it is comprehended in the term "medical"), i.e., a psychological or psychopathic disability. It is not ubiquitous among the blind, but it is too important to be overlooked. It is often called "the inferiority complex."

Possibly it is commoner among blind people than among other disabled persons; for blindness is held by some to be the last and worst misfortune, and sympathy towards the blind is immediate and spacious. . . . But every good gift can be abused. Here is an instance of it. In a certain subtle sense a person may become intoxicated simply by drinking in too greedily of sympathy intended to do him good. It seems true of that type of blind person who, with his blindness, acquires a sense of defeat and abjectness. He becomes convinced of his personal impotence, and acquiesces in it. Having succumbed, he does not, however, lose that healthy thirst for the good things of life he believes himself no longer able to grasp. Much of the pride of independence he might have known is gone; he is admittedly dependent and—humiliated; but all his natural appetites persist and obsess him. He needs and expects sympathy, and in concrete form. Soon he learns to take it all for granted, and wishes (always dissatisfied and not without resentment somewhere deep in his being) for still more.

In itself, this is legitimate enough; the strong man puts out an able hand, and, if he can, takes more. This blind man puts out both hands, and waits for what will surely fall into them. Life has dealt him a foul deal; he owes it nothing, it owes him everything. He has lost all will and power to independence, is demoralised and undone. To force such a man into employment with happiness and success might be indeed a problem.

There exists a less acute form of this spiritual infirmity. In one of the blind employment factories known to me there are blind people who, though they go daily to work, sincerely think that, as blind people, they should not be expected to work at all. They would, if they could, readily accept one hundred per cent. charity as their due. And this idea does not pass altogether disapproved.

An inferiority complex, in the opinion of some thoughtful observers, is too often impressed upon children in our Blind Schools. In after-life they show it in a cringing, servile, unstable deportment, which, contrary to helping them, sharply accentuates their disability. I feel that too serious a view of this is impossible. Nothing should be omitted from the child's education which may tend to eradicate from his mind the sense of personal inferiority, and every conceivable step should be taken to implant in him self-confidence and self-respect, which will assure to him in after-life fearlessness, a frank, open mien and graceful manners; for the world must of necessity accept one at first at the value at which one presents oneself. Curtness, rudeness, superciliousness, and any kind of behaviour, any circumstance or conditions capable of humiliating the blind child or mentally hurting him, should be rigorously deprecated. It is well to concentrate on physical culture. We are all agreed that it means much. But no less attention should be devoted to mental and spiritual—not necessarily religious—culture, and this none the less if, as is often the case, the children come of lowly stock and from poor surroundings. We are keen to give our normal children the best chances we can in life. Blind children are actually in need of still better chances. They should, if we really desire them to fill the place of good, useful citizens among us, be educated with additional care; so that, when eventually they come to bargain with the world, they may offer their attainments in compensation for that they cannot give.

Cheap service in our blind schools should be anathema. Cheap tools, human or other, are not as a rule good tools; and a first-rate job is not to be expected with second-rate tools.

What we do for our blind children now will determine what they will do for themselves later, and to some extent we can fix the quality of the service they will be able to sell to the world as men and women.

Most blind people are, of course, quite ordinary people who have simply lost their eyesight. They still retain the urge to activity. If that urge is not frustrated, but gratified as fully as possible, the loss can be considerably neutralised. The panacea is undoubtedly gainful employment, with its inseparable concomitant, the power to lead a full life. Consciousness of defeat, inferiority, humiliation, unhappiness, resentment, give place to a philosophic contentment and self-respect, to the pleasures of an equal in the companionship of equals, with a convinced sense of a right to their respect.

In one blind employment factory I know, this is fortunately the case for most of the blind people; they are good men and good women, daily and yearly doing their best, liberally participating in the life and interests of their fellows. Conscious of the limitations imposed by their disability, they are nevertheless proudly independent, aware of their human dignity, and resentful of any patronage. They accept favours with appreciation and with equanimity. They are ordinary men and women If the founders of such institutions could be repaid, their reward would be incalculable.

Besides whatever benefit may accrue to the State from the employment of the disabled (and every penny earned adds that much to the wealth of society) we must seek to confer upon the greatest number of the blind the nearest possible approach in every way to parity with their more fortunate fellows—that they “may have life, and have it more abundantly.” Ethically, this is by far the highest motive for employment.

(To be concluded.)

FOREIGN NEWS

Registration of the Blind in the States.—Massachusetts is the first State in the U.S.A. to require registration of the blind, reports Associated Press from Boston.

Dr. Hugo Reimer, Chairman of the Medical Advisory Committee, described the new law as “a step forward in the prevention of unnecessary blindness.” He said it would provide doctors with a true picture as to the causes of blindness and lead to early diagnosis and prevention in many cases.

HOME NEWS

Scottish National Federation General Council.

—Delegates from many parts of Scotland attended the annual General Council meeting of the Scottish National Federation for the Welfare of the Blind at Kirkcaldy, on June 12th. Mr. F. W. Hobby, Dundee, presided, and the Report for the year was presented. In a discussion that followed the adoption of the Report a suggestion was made by Mr. Alwyn Frederick, Edinburgh, that the names of the various institutions might be very much shortened. He said it would be a good idea if they could be standardised in some way. It would increase public interest in the institutions and societies if more attractive names were adopted.

“I represent Edinburgh and South-East Scotland Society for Teaching the Blind to Read in Their Own Homes,” said Mr. Frederick, “and if you can memorise a name like that and remember to put it in your will you are very clever indeed. I suggest that the executive should go into the matter very closely.”

Mr. T. J. Mulholland, Glasgow, said they were on dangerous ground. It was in their constitution that the Federation would not interfere with anything individual societies wished to do and it was a matter for those societies and not for the Federation at all.

Office-bearers were appointed as follows:—President, Miss Annie D. Edward, Arbroath; vice-president, Mr. C. H. W. G. Anderson, Edinburgh; secretary and treasurer, Mr. J. Duncan MacDiarmid, Aberdeen.

✚ **Need for Further Homes for the Blind.**—The need for further Homes for the Blind was stressed recently at the annual meeting of the Isle of Ely Society for the Blind, and in a recommendation received at the Public Health and Assistance Committee of the Norfolk County Council, from the Norwich Institution for the Blind.

The latter Institution suggested that after the war a central area home and sick bay, with from 50 to 70 beds, for aged blind persons, should be built in Norwich. It was agreed to send a reply in favour of the idea without committing the County Council in any way. Reference to the recommendation was also made at the annual meeting of the Isle of Ely Society, and the chairman urged that it should receive every support.

Royal Institution for the Blind, Birmingham : New School Premises Purchased.—It was announced at the ninety-sixth annual meeting on June 30th, that Lickey Grange, the residence of the late Lord Austin, has been purchased, together with 26 acres of land, for the purposes of a new school. Mr. Wilfred C. Matthews (chairman of the General Committee) said the site was well in the country while still easily accessible from Birmingham; and the committee felt that it would be possible to provide a school there which would be the best in the country.

Home Teachers' Association.—Home Teachers east and west of the Pennines met recently at Preston and York to discuss the formation of an Association for Home Teachers. At both meetings it was unanimously decided to form such an association and that it should be on a national basis. The Home Teachers' Association is not connected with any other organisation and will not interfere with the teachers' personal membership of the College of Teachers. A temporary committee to act for three months, consisting of four members and a secretary, was appointed to inaugurate the machinery necessary to organise the Association. Within ten days of the formation of the Association the committee had held its first meeting, and it is pressing forward with all the preliminary work which has to be accomplished before the permanent committee is elected by a postal ballot in September.

Membership is restricted to practising and retired Home Teachers. Already over 25 per cent. of the total number of Home Teachers employed in Great Britain and Ireland have joined the Association, and steps are being taken to make it known to all Home Teachers. Teachers are urged to join before the end of August so that they may take their share in the permanent establishment of the Association. In order to provide the funds necessary for the initial expenses, members are asked to pay a temporary subscription of 2s. per month for the first three months. Any teachers wishing to join should send their subscriptions to the Temporary Honorary Secretary of the Association, 5, St. John Street, Manchester 3.

The Blind in Northern Ireland.—The Blind Welfare Association and the Association for the Employment of the Industrial Blind recently submitted a joint memorandum in

relation to Blind Persons in Northern Ireland to the Parliamentary Public Health Committee. The memorandum pressed the Government to take further steps in relation to Prevention of Blindness in the Six Counties, pointed out the need for better facilities for the education, training and employment of the blind, and claimed that the financial disability consequent on blindness should be "fully provided for" by the State. The Associations accompanied their memorandum with a copy of the memorandum on Blind Welfare and Social Security recently submitted by the Secretary-General of the National Institute for the Blind to Sir William Beveridge's Committee.

Blindness in Children under five years of age.—The National Institute for the Blind, concerned at the marked and apparently accelerating increase in the demand for accommodation in its Sunshine Homes, has just completed an inquiry into blindness in children under the age of five throughout the country.

An article dealing with the subject in some detail will appear in our next issue.

Ministry of War Transport and White Sticks.—The Ministry's Committee on Road Safety in War has recently decided to give wide publicity to the use of white sticks by the blind, so that those members of the public, and especially drivers of vehicles, who still do not know that the white stick denotes blindness, shall be enlightened. Anything that minimises the danger of road-accidents is to be welcomed, and perhaps those blind people who hitherto have been prejudiced against using a white stick may, in view of the Ministry's action, reconsider their decision.

Proposed North Wales Regional Council.—At a recent meeting of the Welfare of the Blind Committee of Flintshire County Council it was decided that each of the six North Wales County Councils should be invited to appoint representatives to attend a conference, with the object of forming a North Wales Regional Council to discuss the welfare of the blind in North Wales and to work in co-operation with the Welsh Regional Council for the Blind.

NEWS FROM INDIA

We have the permission of Major Sir Clutha Mackenzie, the St. Dunstaner who is organising welfare measures for blinded Indian soldiers (and who has also been asked by the Government of India to prepare post-war plans for the welfare of blind civilians), to include in THE NEW BEACON the following extracts from an article he has written at the request of Mr. Irwin, of the American Foundation for the Blind:—

WE are dealing with every war-blinded Indian man as suits his circumstances best—some for training, others will not leave their village. Some cannot train, poor boys—one with both forearms amputated, another with right forearm off and left hand useless. We set out to make their home conditions as comfortable as we can. For the latter man, for instance, we are building a house and buying a phonograph and a wife. The latter is aged thirteen. That may not sound in order to American ears, but it is quite in keeping with law and custom in his part of the world. We are considering at the moment the difficult question as to whether we should not give the training before the man is discharged from the Army—otherwise the man is usually very loth to leave his village.

The Government of India have asked me to prepare a comprehensive plan for the development of civilian blind work, which, you already know, is a tremendous problem in this vast

country of four hundred million people, and blind variously estimated to number from one to four million. Some twenty-six schools, workshops and homes already exist, but most of them are faced with difficulties so great and on such slender incomes that they can make little headway. Altogether they take care of only twelve hundred of the several million. Begging is the time-honoured occupation of the vast majority. The sacred works of Hindu and Muslim give the injunction—give to the poor, the maimed and the sick, and you will find favour in God's sight. That established the age-old "social security" system of India. Just as under our modern Social Security we find malingerers who deliberately make their living by exploiting the provisions for all they are worth, so also does a section in India—a beggar caste, which passes the profession of begging on from parent to child, and the children are sometimes maimed to make them more appealing. In Bombay recently I

came across an eight-year-old boy whom a magistrate had just sent in to a home for the blind. At the age of four he had been kidnapped from his respectable village parents by members of a robber caste, who had deliberately blinded him and taken him to Bombay as a decoy for begging purposes. He had been on the streets for four years until taken charge of by the police.

The Societies have been battling hard against things as they are, but they have lacked the guns. The field they have failed to capture is that of convincing both the blind, their relatives and the seeing public that education and vocational training have given and can give the trainee a better, or as good an earning power as that of the beggar. The blind child has an immediate income value to its parents, and as in many instances no dishonour is attached to sending their child to beg, they are unwilling to send it to a school for the blind unless they can see an ample money reward in the end.

But there is a growing public opinion in India inside and outside government circles that it is time something bigger and more positive should be done about it. The task is difficult and intricate: and they want to know

just where and how to make this effort. That is the task the Government has set me. At the moment we are assembling the experiences and the views of those who have laboured hard through many years of heart-breaking work.

Of course, a very large amount of blindness in India is preventable or curable. Government health services, philanthropic societies and missions are and have been at work in this field for many years, many with devoted self-sacrifice, and the number whose sight they have saved must be tremendous. But the field is so great that considerable extension is needed. So much of the reduction in blindness depends upon better sanitation, more balanced diet, abandonment of much of Indian medicines and treatments and simple precautions against common diseases. Changes in these directions are in progress, but, with ancient peoples deeply conservative at heart and not at all convinced that the West knows better than the Orient, abandoning age-old religious beliefs and changing deep rooted customs is a painfully slow business. There is much of frustration and disappointment. But the task has been begun, and it must go on steadily and with confidence in ultimate achievement.

AN ANNIVERSARY—MATHIAS ROTH, M.D.

SIXTY years ago (in July, 1883) what appears to have been the first Conference on Blind Welfare in this country was held at the Yorkshire School for the Blind, and an address on the Physical Education of the Blind was given by a delegate who was not of British birth. He was Dr. Mathias Roth, a Hungarian patriot, and supporter in his younger days of Kossuth, the people's leader against the Austrians. He had been caught carrying despatches during the revolution of 1848-9, and imprisoned, was released on parole and came to England, where he was naturalised about 1853. At the time of the York Conference he was a man of over sixty, and a highly qualified though unorthodox physician, regarded by many of his less enlightened contemporaries as a crank: when in 1850, for example, he had advocated the physical training of student-teachers to the then head of the only Government Training College for Men, he received a dignified reproof:—"The Rev. Mr. Temple (later Bishop of Exeter) told me that the future schoolmasters had already too much to do, and that there was no time for teaching scientific

cally how to develop the bodily faculties and how to preserve bodily health."

For the worker for the blind, two of Dr. Roth's special interests are important: his work in connection with the prevention of blindness, and his concern for the physical education of the blind. These were but special aspects of his many-sided concern for social reform. He worked for infant welfare, for compulsory school medical inspection, for better housing and sanitation, for the training of infant-school teachers, for the enlightened treatment of neurasthenia, for physical education in the schools on Swedish principles, for the re-education of deformed or injured limbs without the wearing of heavy irons and supports, for reform in women's dress, for better school furniture: and it seems deplorable that the work of so ardent a reformer should have received so little recognition, and be buried so deeply today in about a dozen pamphlets which have survived in the British Museum.

His paper on the Physical Education of the Blind opens with a depressing account of the general physical condition of the people of this

country, and he goes on to say that the condition of the blind was no better;—"Stooping gait, flat chests, round and high shoulders, shuffling walk, lateral and other curvatures of the spine . . . are a few of the characteristic symptoms frequently found among the blind."

He defines physical education as instruction in the principles of simple hygiene, combined with scientifically devised exercises, founded on sound anatomical and physiological principles, and states as its aim "the harmonious development of body and mind."

In preparation for his paper he had sent a questionnaire on the subject of the physical education of the blind to fifty schools, Homes and workshops, enquiring whether they gave any form of such education. Only eleven provincial replies had been received, and of these, six gave classes in drill, one of them only "at times"; Norwich had blind man's buff in the garden, but added bluntly—"no attention to the development of the body is bestowed upon the inmates," and four did nothing. In London, nothing was done except at the Royal Normal College. It is interesting, however, to read elsewhere in one of Dr. Roth's pamphlets that *papier maché* models of his gymnastic apparatus, modelled on the exercises of Ling, were purchased by the London Society for Teaching and Training the Blind, Swiss Cottage.

Dr. Roth, in his paper, describes physical education as he understood it as two-sided:—(a) It must not interfere with the natural development of the body, and (b) It must develop the body by exercises based on physiological principles. Under the first heading he stressed proper clothing, allowing for growth and free movement, and condemned "tight collars, coats, corsets, garters, boots and shoes, still too frequently found in Blind Institutions." (In this connection Dr. Roth's youngest daughter, who is still living, tells of her own discomfiture when, as a small girl, she walked with her father in Hyde Park, and he commented audibly on the tightly-laced ladies whom they met. Her agonised—"Hush, papa, they will hear you," was only met with the calm rejoinder, "I intend, my dear, that they should.")

He urged reform of school furniture, condemning backless forms and chairs which were too high or too low and did not fit the growing child, and showed a model desk built by a North-country firm to his own design. In an appendix to Dr. Fuch's "Causes and Prevention of Blindness," Dr. Roth wrote in detail of improved school furniture, his essay being delightfully illustrated with sketches showing boys and girls writing and drawing in good and bad positions.

He went on to plead for light and nourishing food for the growing child, and condemned "the unsuitable and too frequent use of suet and other puddings with the intention of filling the pupil's stomach."

Under his second heading, the development of the body by means of exercises, he advocated the Swedish exercises of Ling, which, in his view, "enabled the blind . . . to share in the beneficial effects of rational daily exercise without exposing them to the danger of being injured, as often happens in exercises with gymnastic apparatus."

Dr. Roth's work in connection with the prevention of blindness was not less important, and was perhaps better known than that for physical education of the blind. He was Hon. Secretary and Treasurer of the first Society for the Prevention of Blindness, founded in 1880, and was largely responsible for the Society's initiative in offering a prize of £80 for an essay on Causes and Prevention of Blindness: the essay might be written in English, French, German or Italian, and was won in 1885 by Dr. Ernst Fuchs, of Liège, for a treatise which is still regarded as a standard work of scientific importance.

In a paper by Dr. Roth on prevention, which was also read at the York Conference, he stressed the importance of studying the causes of blindness, and gave particulars of 2,500 cases which had been examined by a German ophthalmologist. He emphasised the prevalence of ophthalmia neonatorum, and urged the importance of "general and specially ocular hygiene of mothers, nurses and all those to whom the care of infants is entrusted." He urged the better training of general practitioners in the treatment of eye diseases, and the place of fuller knowledge of the principles of health in the prevention of typhus, measles, small pox and scarlatina, and ended his paper by showing how much the country lost even from a purely economic standpoint by its neglect of preventable blindness.

The London Society for the Prevention of Blindness does not appear to have been long-lived, but "it seems" (to quote the Report on the Prevention of Blindness, in 1936) "to have been the first organised movement for the prevention of blindness in this country, and to have provided a stimulating example even after it had ceased to function." Its publications included a pamphlet translated from a German Government paper, "Instructions to midwives concerning the special care of the newly-born in cases of eye inflammation."

It is impossible in this brief note of Dr. Roth's work to deal with his activities other than those

connected with the welfare of the blind. He wrote Open Letters to Members of the Government (and was apparently ignored by them); he read papers at Medical Congresses in Rouen, Florence and Turin; he was awarded medals at International Exhibitions in London and Paris; he fulminated against the "fever-dens of North-West and West-Central London"; he wrote of "the deterioration of the physique of the population" and of "the great mortality of children," and gave horrifying figures in this last connection—"45 to 50 of all children born are in their graves before they are five years old"; he even produced packs of cards in which

"each card presents an accurate representation of some position in which the body is to be placed, accompanied by instructions, explaining the methods of playing various amusing games." He so fired members of his own family with his enthusiasms that five of his sons became medical men.

We are told that this country, by admitting within her borders men who have failed to find freedom in their own native countries has often benefited no less than they; to such a theory, a life of service for others like that lived by Mathias Roth gives strong support.

M. G. T.

ECONOMIC EARNINGS

By BEN PURSE

DURING the past few months a considerable amount of Press publicity has been given to methods of remuneration obtaining in various workshops for the blind, and far too much stress has been laid upon the desirability of securing high subsidies from local authorities rather than concentrating upon economic earnings. It is not suggested here that workshop managers are disposed to press for these subsidies beyond amounts that are reasonable, but there is a definite tendency in certain quarters to regard high subsidies as being the be-all and end-all of effort to obtain a decent standard of life. What we have to consider is whether these workshops are in reality industrial undertakings or simply relief stations. If this last conception is to dominate all our activities, then we need not trouble ourselves about the economic aspect of things because the ratepayer will be expected to find all the money that is necessary, and output as such will tend to become an insignificant quantity.

Productivity and efficiency tests were introduced into our workshops for the purpose of deliberately restraining the adverse tendency we have mentioned, and it cannot be disputed that these tests have had a very salutary effect upon the standard of production. The results would have been even better than they are if managements and workers had co-operated more fully. Nevertheless the success attained has been really worth while, and in some measure at least has served to retain a number of workshops on the industrial plane.

The conditions now prevailing in the labour market are such as to give our workshops for the blind a premier place in industry which they never previously enjoyed. That is shown con-

clusively by the profits that are being made and the increased volume of employment that is available. Therefore this is no time for inviting local authorities to provide increased subsidies, when a little extra effort would yield to the worker a higher standard of living than ever subsidies are able to secure. In effect subsidies on wages constitute a form of public relief which is made available to blind persons for two specific reasons, the first of which is based upon the assumption that the handicap of blindness does not enable the average worker to secure the same remuneration from the pursuit of his craft as can be obtained by the unhandicapped worker. This is, of course, a justifiable reason for providing assistance where an industry is badly paid or where piecework rates of remuneration are so unsatisfactory as to be incapable of affording the worker that standard of subsistence to which he is entitled as a citizen. Conditions in the labour market to-day, however, are not static, and the elimination of the competitive factor has for the time being registered prices at such a level as to enable any craftsman of average ability to obtain economic earnings higher than anything he has previously known.

Whilst it is desirable then not wholly to ignore the principle of granting subsidies, it is much more expedient that we should so concentrate upon production as to secure the highest possible amount of trade earnings, not only to demonstrate our ability as craftsmen, which is important, but to assert and maintain the principle of citizenship. The Universal Dictionary of the English Language, edited by H. C. Wyld, speaking of a citizen, says: "He is one who is a member of a city community, enjoying rights and privileges as a burgess and bound by duties of loyalty." Writing on citizenship in the same

work, the following statement appears in more exact definition form : " The status of a citizen ; the duties and privileges pertaining to it ; the state of being a citizen." It is obvious that no community could exist except for a very brief period, if it had to survive upon the contributions levied for the maintenance of health and other services ; by such procedure we would have diverted taxation from its original purposes and employed its limited means for the maintenance of objects quite foreign to the specific intentions of those who were responsible for county and county borough amenities. In other words, the majority of people residing in any defined area could not hope to thrive upon doles, and the public relief which comes to us in the form of subsidies is a diversion of taxation for a purpose which was never originally conceived by the governing bodies who are now charged with the business of administration. These subsidies are and should be mere incidents in the scheme of things ; they are not in any sense whatever the basis of life, but are supplementary to those larger activities by which we are expected to earn our daily bread.

When the idea of granting supplementary assistance was first conceived by a Government Committee, it was realised that for a variety of reasons production was registered at a very low level in workshops for the blind, and in addition to the reason already assigned, it was held that a handicap allowance would have a stimulating effect on production, whilst at the same time workshop managements would be able to insist upon more satisfactory quality in respect of the articles produced. These results have unquestionably been attained, and the workers as a whole have responded to the invitation extended to them by those who are responsible for the provision of subsidies.

There is, however, a very real danger in the present situation, for there would appear to be a growing disposition to ask for high wages regardless of productive values, and thus completely to disregard the fundamental basis upon which wages rest. It must not be forgotten that in the main wage rates are determined by the ability of the industry to bear the imposition of the charges made, and the volume of production must of necessity bear reasonable relationship to the costs involved. Under present conditions there is a considerable margin of economic freedom which can be exercised by workshops for the blind, for there is no lack of employment and commodity prices are high. When we read, therefore, of certain organisations where economic earnings bear no real relationship to the sums

that are provided in the form of minimum wages in these establishments, we must be seriously concerned.

The Borough Treasurer of Swansea, Mr. R. A. Wetherall, recently is reported to have said that : " The Corporation was making grants for the augmentation of earnings at the rate of £1 per week plus £8 per capita per annum for administrative expenses, but there was no inducement for them to earn more, because whatever they earned was augmented up to a minimum of £3. 5s. per week. Every employee in the institution showed a worse record than in any institution in Wales and probably any other part of the country, while apart from the hours worked, ' unemployable ' blind were employed." In the June number of THE NEW BEACON, Mr. Wetherall is reported to have said that the average earnings of the male adult workers in the Swansea Institution were 16s. 10d. per week, a very low figure indeed, and one which, as we have already stated, bears no reasonable relationship to the minimum wage now being paid.

When all allowances are made for the management and for the workers, such as lack of adequate accommodation and working space, the facts leave something to be desired, and it is evident that the productivity and efficiency tests are not being properly applied. Either the workshop must be regarded as a *bona fide* industrial undertaking or a pastime occupational centre, and if the latter is the case, then it is for the institution committee and for the local authority to say how far they are prepared to pay a reasonably high minimum wage for production costs registered at a terribly high level. One thing is abundantly clear : there is a primary duty devolving upon the Board of Management of the Institution to examine meticulously their production and trading departments with a view to determining (1) whether they are buying raw material under the most advantageous conditions ; (2) to satisfy themselves that the raw material is yielding finished products in sufficient volume to justify the expenditure that is being incurred ; (3) to ascertain that their selling costs are such as to meet all reasonable labour charges with such a margin of profit as to cover overheads and non-productive wages ; (4) to make quite certain that the quality of work that is being supplied to the public is such as to command prices that are comparable with those charged by other manufacturers ; (5) the fulfilment of the foregoing conditions largely depends upon the attitude of the workers whose production should at all times be registered at such a high level as

to avoid the kind of criticism to which reference has already been made.

This would not be a very onerous task if it is tackled with a sincere desire to put crooked things straight, and so to arrange that production costs, viz., the charge for raw materials, economic wages and all other incidence of cost that may legitimately be charged against production, shall be properly ascertained and covered. A small sub-committee of four or five people at the most, provided they have knowledge and experience, should be able to correct these evils without further delay, and if it is felt that outside help would be useful and desirable, there is nothing undignified in such procedure, if the Board of Management were to seek this assistance. There are many precedents for the adoption of such a course, and larger organisations than that of the Swansea Institution have found it necessary from time to time to conduct such investigations.

Below we give the average economic earnings obtained by blind workers in some of the industrial institutions for the year ended March 31st, 1942. Later figures are not yet available.

	Men.	Women.
Birmingham ..	35s. 9d.	18s. 6d.
Cardiff ..	28s. 2d.	9s. 9d.
Hull ..	24s. 6d.	10s. 0d.
Manchester ..	21s. 2d.	12s. 10d.
Nottingham ..	27s. 9d.	14s. 3d.
Norwich ..	33s. 4d.	14s. 8d.

It will be noted that the above-named group may be described as comprising some of the

larger workshops, and the overall average is 28s. 5d. per week for men, and 13s. 4d. for women.

A group of smaller workshops, comprising Blackpool, Cheltenham, Ipswich, Plymouth, Walsall and Warrington, shows an overall average for men of 24s. 11d., and for women 11s. 2d.

It must be conceded that averages in nearly all these establishments, with certain notable exceptions, are low, but there is at least some evidence that the productivity and efficiency tests are operative, and there is every reason for believing that when the figures for 1942-43 are available, marked increases will be shown. In the meantime we have to emphasise more strongly the fact that going to work is a serious business. It is the way of life which most of us should desire to follow, and public relief, no matter how wisely conceived, should never be regarded as the real alternative to earning a livelihood. Any other doctrine that runs counter to this conception is a false gospel which should be despised not only by members of the blind community, but by all other handicapped folk, for as we have said already, it is the negation of true citizenship. Thomas Carlyle reminds us that "There is a perennial nobleness and even sacredness in work. Were he never so benighted, forgetful of his high calling, there is always hope in a man who honestly and earnestly works ; in idleness alone is there perpetual despair."

(To be continued.)

THE ELDERLY BLIND : WHAT CAN THEY DO ?

By A. E. BAWTREE, F.R.P.S.

4. General Repairs and Toy Making

THE acquisition of a little elementary experience in handling glass, tin and other metals, added to the instinctive knowledge of how to shape wood, opens up a real field of usefulness, giving pleasure to the worker and the feeling of self-respect. The saying has crystallised in my family, "Grandpa mend it." The children seldom bring broken toys which I am not able to restore, and it is not only the children who look to me for repair work. On one occasion half a dozen small-size table knives had been placed in a saucepan of water to soak. Someone placed the pan on the gas stove, where, in another place a ring was alight. The flames caught the knife handles which all blazed away to ashes. A local jeweller quoted three and six per knife for

repairing them. I therefore wrote to a celluloid company for a small block of white xylonite, which cost half-a-crown. I cut it into strips, shaped these with file and sandpaper, and finally drilled holes in the ends, and cemented the blades in. The knives are as good as new, and that at a cost of half-a-crown as against the trade charge of a guinea. For this work I possess one facility beyond those already described, namely, a small lathe, but those who have not got this can always get a garage to drill holes at a penny or twopence each.

The resetting of knives into their handles is often needed. To do this the hole in the handle is filled with powdered sealing-wax. The blade-shank is then heated till it hisses when touched with a wet finger. The shank is pushed right

home into the hole, and any sealing-wax that oozes out is scraped off, preferably while still warm and soft.

Straight strips of tin are required for some repair jobs, and while it is not easy for a person, even with sight, to cut these with true edges, it is possible even without sight to make a perfect job of it. To true up the first side of a strip, fold the tin over for about half an inch against a ruler, hammer the bent-over strip closely down, but without too much hammering which would distort the metal. File the edge of the fold, and then open it out; the tin will break accurately along the line of the fold. Any burr can be removed with a touch of the file. Now, guided by the ruler, fold the tin over again to the desired width. Hammer down, file, open up and break off—and as perfect a straight strip is obtained as could be produced by machinery.

Leaded glass windows are now in common use, and repair of a broken pane is easy. With a knife open up the lead grooving on one side, pull out the broken glass. By means of repeated trial and error, shape a piece of card just to fit the opening. Cut a piece of glass to the size of the card as described in the previous article. Place the glass in position, and rub the lead edging down again with a blunt point or edge.

Door-handles often come off. When the little screw which goes through the handle into a pit in the bar is intact, all that is needed is to tighten this screw up, but if the thread is worn or the screw is missing, I prefer to make a more robust job of the thing once and for all. I slip the handle on to the bar, which has the pits uppermost, and with the point of a nail feel till I have the hole in the handle over the right pit. I roll up a little pellet of bread and drop it into the hole. Removing the handle I feel which hole the pellet has entered, remembering its position, as second, third, or so on. I then drill the hole in the handle right through both sides, and drill the pit right through the bar. I then cut off the suitable length of a thick nail to form a rivet, pass this right through handle and bar and hammer down the tail end of the rivet, holding something heavy and solid against the head of the nail to take the shock of the blows.

When saucepan lid handles come off, I make straight strips of tin as described, bend the edges of these over to make smooth outer edges to the finished handle, and the handle is then bent up to shape and rivetted on.

I can do any kind of soldering job in which the parts to be joined can be bound together with

wire, and then held in a gas flame to solder. The parts must be well cleaned with emery paper, and smeared with some soldering flux, such as Fluxite, obtainable in small tins like vaseline. A small piece of solder is placed beside and preferably slightly higher up than the join, and the assembly is heated in the gas till the solder has melted and run. To ascertain this, I place a piece of wetted paper below the gas ring. When I hear drops of solder fall hissing on to the paper, it shows that the joint is made.

I make all alterations to electric lighting myself. The work is quite straightforward, and I need only give two tips. Turn the current off at the main before touching the wiring and, when cleaning the end of a piece of flex, see that the innermost layer of cotton has been removed, or contact may not be made. To ascertain this, see that you can pull the bundle of little wires in the flex apart.

Toy-making is so common an occupation of the blind that it calls for little mention, but I will just briefly describe one toy which can be made from scrap material and is most popular. It is a railway engine. The boiler is made by glueing card round a tin which is afterwards removed. A disc of card is glued into one end. Three pieces of stick are cut to fit across the inside of the boiler. Two are placed upright, one at the front, the other half way along, and the third is put crossways at the back end. The boiler is both glued to the baseboard, and nailed through this board up into the upright sticks. The funnel and dome are shaped from round pieces of stick and are both glued and nailed on to the tops of the sticks. The front of the cab, with window holes bored in it, is glued to the baseboard and to the horizontal stick in the boiler, and is additionally fixed to this by a screw. The sides and roof of the cab are of thin wood or stout card. They are both glued and nailed to the front board. Buffers are cut from round stick and are glued and nailed at both ends of the baseboard, which also bears a staple in the middle of the front for fixing a string for pulling. Wheels are slices cut from old curtain poles or other round wood, and loosely nailed to the baseboard. Finally, a little square block is glued on to the baseboard in the middle of the front right up against the boiler. A little disc of card or wood is glued to the front of this block which forms a recognisable lamp. A little help may be needed in painting the toy, which should previously be well sized.

(To be continued)

IS THERE A FUTURE FOR VOLUNTARYISM?

IN a paper *Voluntaryism in Blind Welfare*, given at a recent Conference of the Southern Regional Association for the Blind, Mr. Eagar, Secretary-General of the National Institute, urged the importance of maintaining the voluntary principle in post-war schemes for blind welfare. He did not deny that the State and the local authority had a part (and probably an ever-increasing part) to play, but opposed those who would suggest that voluntaryism is dying or dead, quoting in support of his view such widely divergent thinkers and politicians as Dr. A. D. Lindsay, Lord Elton and Mr. Herbert Morrison—all of whom claim that voluntaryism is part of the very texture of democracy in this country.

The rôle of the volunteer in initiation and experiment is always conceded, and everyone agrees in praising the social explorer who cuts his way through the jungle of popular prejudice, so that the tarmac highway can eventually be built: the point at issue is, whether as State and local authority assume more and more responsibility, the voluntary system should fade out altogether?

One of the strongest arguments for voluntaryism is its adaptability: it can take risks and make experiments in a way that would be impossible or even wrong, for those responsible for the spending of public money. But human needs are diverse, and can never be neatly fitted into Government pigeon-holes. The man who fell among thieves needed, at one and the same time, competent first aid, transport, lodging, ready money, good credit and a friend free from racial prejudice: succour on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho had to be prompt where a dying man was concerned, and the Good Samaritan could not have waited to see that all the victim's papers were in order, or delayed while steps were taken to reform the policing of a notoriously dangerous highway.

In the twenty odd years that have elapsed since the passing of the Blind Persons Act, we have had, in the blind world, an example of voluntaryism and State control working side by side in reasonable harmony. One interesting feature of the period, commented upon by Mr. Eagar in his paper, has been the part played by the blind themselves. Knowing better than anyone else where the shoe pinches, the blind man has been able to contribute to the subject from his own experience. Probably blindness more than any other physical disability, inspires those suffering from it to corporate action in its mitigation. Side by side with the seeing, the blind have sat on the Councils of voluntary organisations and on Blind Persons Act Committees, or have formed themselves into associations, political and social for their own welfare.

There have been some inefficient voluntary agencies, some inequalities between district and district: municipalisation has not always proved a success: but the twenty-three years since 1920 seem to show that there is a place for both voluntaryism and public control, and for closer co-operation between them. In his paper, Mr. Eagar outlines a possible form that such co-operation might take—the creation of a new type of organisation, a hybrid public voluntary body, composed of representatives of the Local Authority and of the general public, voluntarily associating themselves with the work. To this body, the Local Authority would delegate the responsibility for blind welfare, subject of course to that authority (probably guided by the Ministry of Health) being satisfied that the work was properly done. Such a body would raise voluntary revenue, and would aim at providing a complete service.

It would have that uniformity and reliability praised by Dr. Lindsay in his "Modern Democratic State," but it would avoid the "stiffness" and the arbitrary use of power by officials, which he considers the possible defects of statutory administration. The tradition of friendliness, independence and enterprise, commended by Lord Elton as "nourished by the multitudinous voluntary associations of our democracy" would be maintained. Lord Elton suggests that voluntaryism helped our people to withstand the blitzkrieg. Sudden illness or disaster in the blind man's home are lightning-strokes that may demand heroic measures: they can best be met by an organisation (mediated through a wise and sympathetic personal friend, like the best of the home teachers of the blind) at once efficient and business-like, never hide-bound and capable of imaginative action. Alone, voluntaryism is often not rich enough or powerful enough to meet a need: alone, State action or action by a local authority may not be sufficiently adaptable. Working in close inter-dependence, they may achieve much. "The case for voluntaryism," to quote from Mr. Eagar's paper, "has been too seldom and too weakly made of recent years. It is a tremendously strong case, and all the stronger if it is made in connection with a forward-looking plan, aiming at full service and complete co-ordination." THE EDITOR.

WE LIVE AGAIN—V.

By F. BURVILLE—(Concluded.)

ONE of my most interesting experiences of recent times took place a short while ago, when I spent a couple of hours in the company of five Home Teachers. They had travelled from widely separated parts of the country for the purpose of attending a conference, and now that the business was over, and time was their own, they settled down to an informal exchange of experiences, and a discussion upon certain aspects of their daily work. Although I was not a Home Teacher I was accepted as being one of the circle, and found the proceedings most enlightening, so much so that I propose reconstructing, the whole scene in my own words, and passing it on to the readers of THE NEW BEACON. The names which I use are purely fictitious, and are intended to convey the outstanding characteristics of the persons present.

There were three ladies, each possessing sight, Miss Cherub, Miss Forthright, and Miss Modern. The remaining two were men, and were totally blind: Mr. Don and Mr. Earnest. After the usual pleasantries had gone the round, we prevailed upon Mr. Earnest to tell of his early experiences as a young Home Teacher, and that which follows is as true a report of his discourse as my memory will give.

"A National Emergency existed at the time I first undertook the work of Home Teaching, and the position then had features in common with to-day. At a rather early age—earlier in the matter of experience of the world than even my years suggested, I journeyed to a completely unknown part of the country to become the first Home Teacher of the area.

"I set out on my official duties armed with a list of 23 names and addresses, a list taken from an inquiry made many years before. I found persons marked on the list as children, to have become grown men and women; and of the 23, I could trace but 8. I started off tramping from one village to another, inquiring from all and sundry whether they knew of any blind person living in their neighbourhood, and gradually my register grew. Within a comparatively short time the hundred mark was passed, and numbers went up and up, and as time went by the area was readjusted; growing ever smaller as other Home Teachers were appointed.

"Visiting the blind folk of such an area was an education to me. To be able to enter into their lives and interests, and discuss events as they

saw them, was absolutely essential if I was to succeed in gaining their confidence. The outlook of the rural community contrasted greatly with that of our large towns. Whereas people of the great metropolis I had left behind were for the most part individualists, these folk of the countryside had a highly developed community sense.

"I considered them too parochial in outlook, and was wont to smile when I discovered that the only newspaper many of them read was 'The Local Weekly.' I have since discovered, however, that the countryman's attitude to life is firmly based in Nature, and a genuine interest in his fellow-being. An early opportunity presented itself for me to begin to educate myself on matters which were all important to the people with whom I was now to have my being, for after a few days of my arrival an unusually late frost had wrought havoc with the crops of runner beans, had cut off the potatoes, and spoilt the peeping marrow plants. 'A bad business' my ninety-year-old landlord confided. 'I can't remember anything like it since one year back in the sixties.' I found everybody discussing the disaster, so much so that I was impressed to the extent of assuming that an unprecedented catastrophe had occurred. Moreover, every evening, and during the following week-end, crowds swarmed up to the allotments to view the blackened potato haulm, and beans, etc. Yet I had never heard of a harmful frost before this. I had much to learn, but fortunately for me, there were kindly disposed folk around me, and it wasn't long before I knew quite a bit about the right way to drain a field, how to make a bush drain, the pros and cons of dibbing or drilling potatoes, and many such problems.

"I should tell you that I was fortunate in the matter of obtaining lodgings. Within half an hour I was suited. The good woman who took me in was under the impression that it would fall to her lot to escort me round the house, clean my boots, to wash and dress me. Her subsequent actions revealed this state of her knowledge of blind folk to me, but she accepted me without question in spite of it. I remained with her for nine and a half years, until I left her to marry. My commencing salary was twenty shillings, plus four and ninepence War Bonus, from which I paid a guinea per week for board and lodgings. This payment was not calculated to make me feel that the work upon

which I was engaged was of a very high order : especially when a labourer living in the same house with me was in receipt of a war bonus, exclusive of wages, of thirty-three shillings weekly. You may guess that it took all the remaining three and ninepence to provide me with footwear, and to maintain some semblance of tidiness in my dress. Much has been said in criticism of the blind Home Teachers of that period. I have chatted with several such, and all find their experiences were common. I am convinced they gave more in service than many of the better paid Home Teachers of to-day. They received some cash in return for their services, but much of their work went unrecognized, and was motivated by a desire to help those handicapped in a similar manner to themselves.

"In the very early days, before the passing of the Blind Persons Act, 1920, there was little the Home Teacher could do to ease the financial straits in which most of those visited were living. One might teach Braille, or Moon, or some handicraft. I incline to the view that one's knowledge of a subject, be it Braille, Moon, or some handicraft, is apt to determine the amount of teaching one does. I am sure that a trained craftsman, say in basketry, would not hesitate to establish a handicraft class. He would know that the task would not prove beyond his powers. Where the confidence resulting from complete mastery of a craft is lacking, it is natural that such an undertaking would be viewed with some misgivings. Herein lies the opportunity for schools for the blind to train their pupils for careers as Home Teachers, so that they would be able to sweep all before them when competing for the certificate with those who have not been so trained. Our schools could do this, as they have the blind pupils for many years at their most impressionable period of life."

It was about this time that Miss Forthright broke in upon Mr. Earnest's reminiscences to suggest that in view of the fact that large numbers of our unemployable blind who came under their care were too old to undergo handicraft training, one must remember other qualities held by some of our Home Teachers which were quite as important to the well-being of the non-trainable people. She cited a case of a blind Home Teacher in the West Midlands who was just a duffer when it came to teaching handicrafts in the way that had been suggested, but was worth her weight in gold when it came to making blind people happy. This woman possessed a power to entertain, and a charm of character beyond the understanding of all who knew her. Miss Forthright could

speak with knowledge and could say that the authority who employed this teacher placed a very high value on her peculiar gifts, and in such a case Miss Forthright contended that this type of teacher was doing quite as important work as the teacher who ran a handicraft class. I should, perhaps, add that Miss Forthright is a Braille and Moon expert, and probably did not get Mr. Earnest's remarks in true proportion.

Miss Modern wondered just how a Home Teacher without sight could hope to drive a car, or, in other words, enter into competition with the seeing woman in this way. To my surprise, Miss Cherub took it upon herself to answer.

"It seems to me to depend upon what is the most urgent need of the blind. If an appearance of efficiency is the thing needed, then I suppose you and I would look much the better official representative as we drive up to the blind person's door. Personally, my view is (when all has been said about time-saving, etc.), that the all-important matter is that of service to the blind. Moreover, if what we have just heard about the pioneer work done by blind men in the early days is true, surely the powers-that-be owe it to the capable blind to help them to a post, and not to raise barriers."

Miss Forthright prefaced her next remarks by telling us that Miss Cherub was so generous in spirit that she once cooked a roast dinner and carried it a distance of five miles in order that one of her deaf-blind people might enjoy their Christmas dinner. But, as Miss Forthright concluded, we have reached an age when blind people must realize that if they want posts on equal terms with the seeing, they must be prepared to work hard to prove themselves worthy of employment.

There was something about this lady that appealed to my own stern sense of justice, but it was evident that she was not in possession of all the facts of blind welfare, and when she asked, with firmness, of Mr. Don (who up till now had been silent, save for an occasional clearance of his throat), "How is it that a man of your education is not teaching in one of our schools? I suppose you have sat for the School Teachers' certificate?" He replied; "Indeed no! I have not sat for the certificate to which you refer." "And may I ask why?" "Yes, the simple reason is that I believe posts for school teachers are more or less closed to blind persons."

This was an awkward moment, and I suggested we were getting a little off our course and that perhaps Mr. Earnest might tell us more of his early adventures. We agreed with

acclamation, and so Mr. Earnest continued as follows:—

“To-day, when our blind folk are so well cared for by the combination of State and voluntary service, it is quite impossible, I think, fully to appreciate just what kind of lives they led in those distant times. Destitution was rampant, and girls sent home from our institutions at the end of their teens found nothing awaiting them but dependence upon a parent, often with a flock of younger brothers and sisters still at school. As years passed, first one, then another of the younger members of the family would leave school and begin to earn a little money; begin too, to be able to buy their own clothes and have some pocket-money to spend. Invariably, the blind girl must be content with the frock no longer good enough for the younger sister now working. In time the parents passed on to other realms, leaving their dependent offspring to the care of maybe a younger member of the family from whom a solemn promise had been exacted always to care for her.

“I have a case in mind. The blind member of the family had developed a taste for good literature and music, and possessed a highly critical mind and could always be trusted to go straight to the root of any controversial matter under discussion. To meet her after some special treat, such as a visit to a theatre, was almost as good as going to the play itself. I think the words and voices of the actors must have been recorded in her brain; having heard, she seemed almost able to repeat them. She would also rebuild a thesis she had heard expounded and in her ‘Asides’ would display a remarkable insight into the meaning the exponent wished to put across. A really fine intellect in a person capable of appreciating the better and higher things of life, but destined to live a life of economic dependence on a sister who could only earn money by scouring pots and pans, a useful enough occupation, but one which was poorly paid. Until this lady was fifty years of age, her only income was derived from hand knitting. The 1920 Act brought her her first real income, namely, the pension of ten shillings, followed later by a voluntary pension of £20 per annum, and later still, a domiciliary grant of eighteen pence; the domiciliary grant might have been a trifle more but it was considered that her hand-knitting brought her nine-pence per week earned income.

“Many blessings which we receive to-day are taken for granted. The thoughts of the Braille watch remind me of a lady whom I visited during my first week, living alone out in the

country on an income below five shillings per week, dependent for the most part on parcels from a sister; and spending much of the winter months with friends who did not charge for board and lodgings, thus allowing her little weekly income to accumulate for her return home. She was a cheery, lovable soul. This lady, when occupying a single room, awoke on a certain occasion and found everything still and quiet. She felt tolerably refreshed, but concluded it was early morning. In due course she dozed off, waking some time later to find the same hushed atmosphere. ‘What a long night,’ she thought. Again she slept, and again awoke to the same quiet. ‘I must have slept through breakfast time,’ she said to herself. Then, hearing a familiar whistle outside, she popped her head out of the window and asked: ‘Can you tell me the time, please?’ ‘Five o’clock,’ came the reply. ‘But what are you doing here at five o’clock?’ she queried, in a surprised tone. The answer was very matter-of-fact: ‘Come home to tea.’ She had slept through breakfast and dinner. At a little later date, the N.I.B. provided this lady with a Braille watch—a real godsend.

“Again, I encountered a man who had been rather well off at one time, and who told me he thought he had made his old age secure. A few years before, they employed a couple of maids. I used to meet his wife (then 62) tramping off to work in a canteen, doing the washing-up, etc. Her earnings now constituted their income. Mr. P. augmented it by sharpening knives for the neighbours. For this purpose he used the landlord’s sink, and when he showed it me, I found the edge almost worn down to the level of the bottom. One could not apply for pensions and D.A. as we can to-day, and the Poor Law was anathema to one with his background. The N.I.B. did him a great service in fitting him up with a really serviceable grindstone.

“I could recount instance after instance of struggling men who have been helped in their struggles. In those days none of us thought to get something for nothing, but were most appreciative of the assistance given that we might continue to do useful work.

“‘Top-o’-the-Gate’ or the shelter of a leaky tree would constitute my restaurant. How the wind can blow out in the open countryside! Dining quarters were of the *de luxe* variety, if one happened to be fortunate enough to find a barn or a haystack, one side of which was almost certain to afford shelter from a driving rain. However, all days are not wet and windy by a long way, and, given back my youth, I would gladly live those years over again.”

“A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION”

By W. H. COATES

VII.—The Public (II)

IN the light of Tom's experiences as related in our sixth chapter, I ask the reader to consider whether the attitude of the public is not bound to press upon the blind man's mind with a formidable power of suggestion. It is clearly or subtly expressed by word and deed. It is present everywhere. It continues year after year. Unless well fortified by his own friends and by the presence of other blind people, the pilgrim of ordinary fibre will scarcely pass through the Valley of Humiliation without injury. Tom himself, not remarkable for a resistant constitution, soon showed symptoms of the disease. He was naturally rather reserved, but at this time he found his reserve beginning to contract into timidity. There was growing upon him a dread of being conspicuous. If well-intending persons offered him their seats in a bus, as often happened, he used at one time to refuse them doggedly: invariably provoking an argument thereby, and focussing attention upon himself. But now he accepted the offers almost without a protest, simply to avoid the scene which would follow. There was something almost furtive in the way he slunk through public places, trying to be overlooked, hoping not to excite remarks or offers of unwanted help. Nothing could have been more unlike his confident and un-selfconscious demeanour at his country home. Had his spirit not been at length retrieved by regular work, one cannot say to what depths of self-effacement he might not have sunk.

Again we ask, as we asked with Tom on a different issue: "What is to be done about it?" Our answer is the same as before—propaganda is our only weapon. The only hope is to make the public realise the truth of the matter.

It would be a mighty undertaking. More than that, there would be serious complications, for it would immediately clash with some of the present methods of money-raising.

The blind do, of course, need money—large quantities of it. For their education, training and equipment they need it, and in many cases for partial or total maintenance. Money must be got if the Blind World is to go on. Either it must be obtained through private charity, or by state and municipal grants, or both.

I do not propose to review the case for and against state aid, except at the point where

the experience of Tom Thomas bears upon it. Something has already been said of the influence which public appeals for money may have on those who receive them, and of the deleterious repercussions which may affect the blind themselves. One sees that the appeals vary: the more popular kind being addressed almost exclusively to the emotions, while those intended for the more educated take in (not in the derogatory sense, please!) the intellect as well. To constrain a hundred men by sheer logic to give up a little of their wealth, would be a magnificent triumph of reason: far, far harder than to cajole a thousand by rhetoric. I question whether there has ever been an appeal which did not, in spite of apparent coolness, get at the emotions through the imagination. In this work you do not teach, you persuade. You raise the temperature. There is little room for facts, little call for explanations. You must light up the generous emotions, and make them as hot as you can in a short time.

It is natural that pity and allied feelings should accompany the thought of blindness in those who are ignorant of it. We are incurably sentimental. The man who gives lectures on the terrible handicaps which the blind suffer, or about their dark, lonely lives, is only making use of material lying at hand. He is not to be accused of its creation. Nevertheless, he is foster father to a fungus which is poisoning the relations between the blind and the public among whom they work, and he is preventing the germination of a more wholesome and comely plant, which, if allowed to blossom, would sweeten and purify and strengthen those relations. While his ultimate object is to set up the blind man as a happy and useful member of the community, his methods only block the way to that end with a well-camouflaged ambush.

So here is Tom—a perfect illustration of the anomaly. Money raised by public appeal has been used to educate him—to turn him out as a highly qualified and proficient musician: but on coming back and offering his services to that same public which provided the funds, he is immediately buried by a dust-storm of false sentiment blown up by the very process which fitted him to render such services. He walks into the world armed with a University degree, with skill in his art and love of it. He asks to be accepted as capable of doing the job for which he is labelled, and of bearing

whatever responsibility it may entail—in short, he asks for nothing more than to be invested with the honour and dignity of any common citizen; yet all that he hears in reply is, on the one side the sad litany—"Poor fellow!" and on the other side the anthem—"How wonderful!"

If finances came through other channels, the energy and talent now used up in money-raising could be devoted to the publicity campaign which Tom proposed. It would thus be extensive. Results would eventually be felt in the lessening of at least three of the adventitious evils of blindness. The moral, social and economic positions would be eased, though we dare not hope that they would ever disappear.

The new type of publicity would, perhaps, be less attractive—less luscious to the public than the old. It would enlighten them, but the majority prefer to be warmed and excited. When they discovered that the blind were, after all, nothing very odd: that they were moderately happy, that they turned out to be quite natural, that their queerness vanished in the light of reason—then they would soon lose interest. At that point the campaign would have won its greatest battle.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

"37, The Broad."

"Surely," runs the Epilogue of Dr. H. E. Counsell's 37, *The Broad* (Robert Hale, 12s. 6d. net), "Thy goodness and loving kindness have followed me all the days of my life." . . . The words form an appropriate summing-up of the story of over sixty years of a busy Oxford doctor's life. It has been written since total blindness overcame the writer, but there is no hint of gloom in its pages.

"Surrounded by kind friends," old age has no terrors for him, and he has found compensations for blindness. In the closing paragraphs of the book he describes his handicap in terms of living on a desert island, where memory takes the place of the printed word, and where, after building dwelling-house and chapel, "you think it would great fun to build a museum, and fill it with all the interesting and beautiful things which you have begun to discover on your island"—a museum which others can visit.

37, *The Broad* is such a museum, and in its pages the reader accompanies Dr. Counsell to Guy's Hospital in the early eighties, to a

country practice on the Hampshire hills, in the days when doctors bounced leisurely along shady lanes in their buggies, and to his Oxford practice that began in the late nineties and has continued ever since. Lovers of Oxford in the opening years of this century will read with affectionate remembrance of the odd characters that roamed its streets.

Dr. Counsell was always enterprising, and as his undergraduate practice grew he decided that he ought to know for himself something of the University examinations which made his poor patients so distracted, and he was therefore enrolled as a member of New College. In 1906 he took a History degree, and became a lover of the subject he had studied, so that it remained a hobby for years to come.

The visitor to his museum will go with its owner to many foreign countries, either as holiday-maker or as medical attendant to prosperous patients ordered abroad for their health, and will be taken behind the scenes of the O.U.D.S. (on the committee of which Dr. Counsell served).

This is a book which, in the words of Lord Nuffield, who contributes the Foreword and pays tribute in it to his friend, cannot fail "to provide engaging entertainment."

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

"Chain-mail" made by Blind Workers.—The British film of "Henry V," with Laurence Olivier in the title-rôle and directing, has been prepared on the Wicklow estate of Lord Powerscourt.

Fourteen hundred costumes were made by Dublin art students, and "Chain-mail" was produced by blind workers in wool and sprayed with aluminium.

Ordination of St. Dunstaner.—The Rev. D. Pettit, who was ordained to the diaconate by the Bishop of Peterborough on Trinity Sunday, lost his sight on the Balkan front in the last war. After training at St. Dunstan's, Mr. Pettit worked for sixteen years in the offices of a firm of Northampton boot manufacturers. He realised his vocation to the ministry while acting as chairman of the Northampton branch of Toc H.

Blind Baritone.—William Gibson, who sang at Dr. Steinitz's organ recital at St. Olave's Church, York, recently, is a baritone singer in York Minster Choir.

He is an associate of the Royal College of Music as a solo singer, and a licentiate of the Royal Academy of Music as a teacher of singing. He has sung with the Torquay Municipal Orchestra, broadcast about a dozen times, and done a good deal of concert work.

Before the war he was professor of singing at the Royal Normal College, Upper Norwood.

Blind Youth's Stage Success.—A 17-year-old blind youth, Sydney Chan, was recently awarded first place in the finals of a talent contest at Lewisham Hippodrome, in which there were about 70 competitors.

Sitting at the grand piano, he fingered the keys with an expert touch, while into the microphone he gave a series of impersonations. His impression of the bomber out to raid the Ruhr was cleverly presented with deft touches of "inter-com" conversation to add to its realism, and it was this, undoubtedly, that made him safe for the premier award.

The judges, who were guided by the volume of the applause accorded to each artist, were the Mayor and Mayoress of Lewisham, Councillor Joy and Mr. Will Murray, the old-time music-hall star.

PERSONALIA

In the presence of a distinguished company, including several Freemen of Rotherham, the Honorary Freedom of the Borough was recently conferred on ALDERMAN SAMUEL HALL, O.B.E., J.P., a former Mayor of the town, in recognition of long and meritorious service in the interests of the town and its people. Alderman Hall was Chairman of the Blind Persons Committee from 1923 to 1937. He is also a member of the Council of the National Institute for the Blind, and a member of the Ministry of Health Advisory Committee on the Welfare of the Blind.

* * * *

ALDERMAN H. LEESE, who has been closely identified for many years with work for the blind, has been elected to the Executive Committee of the Southern Regional Association for the Blind.

* * * *

MR. B. WILSON has been appointed Secretary of the Joint Blind Welfare Committee of the Staffordshire County Council, in succession to Mr. F. A. Hughes.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Are Ears Dependable?

SIR,—In relating his experiences in the Craft Instructors' Examination, Mr. Burville states that he was able to determine the speed and standard of the candidates on either side of him by the sounds they made while working. The facts, however, tend to prove his assumptions false.

I am not, and never have been, a very quick worker, and though the sounds I made were not familiar to Mr. Burville, my standard was considered high enough by the examiners for them to grant me the same certificate as he himself holds.

Subsequently I have obtained another first class certificate for basketry in competition with fully sighted workers, not to mention honours in two craft subjects in the Home Teachers' Examination.

I am not writing this to boast of my own achievements, but as a warning to some blind people not to let their hearing run away with their imagination.

Yours, etc.,

"THE CANDIDATE ON THE RIGHT."

Lessons in Braille.

To the Editor.

SIR,—The suggestion to include a dozen Braille lessons in THE NEW BEACON is excellent. I would have been thankful for something like that when teaching my friends, and I do hope the suggestion will be taken up.

Yours, etc.,

(Mrs.) HEYWOOD-SMITH.

To the Editor.

SIR,—May I refer your correspondent, V. W. Sussex, to the excellent little pamphlet published by the National Institute, price 1½d., entitled "English Standard Braille, Grades I and II," which will provide all the information required, in a very concise form.

Personally, I do not think it worth while attempting to learn Braille by merely reading it. It is essential to write it. A superficial knowledge of Braille is very easily acquired, but

to write *accurate* Braille is no easy matter, and very careful guidance in its study is necessary to attain success.

Yours, etc.,
GEORGE HOLMES.

Blind or Sighted Home Visitors ?

To the Editor.

SIR,—I have always held the view that the blind as a body were too easily classified as “unemployable” by the powers that be, and that if they were only given the opportunity a great many could be employed in professions and trades at present exclusively reserved for the sighted. But the problem is how to convince others that the blind can be usefully employed when a great many local authorities and agencies for the blind will not employ those they themselves say can be employed. A good many local authorities and agencies do not employ even one blind stenographer or telephonist in their own offices and absolutely refuse to employ blind Home Visitors. Most recent advertisements for Home Visiting vacancies definitely state “Sighted Female.”

I have endeavoured to obtain the reason for refusal to employ blind visitors from several persons holding well paid executive appointments on blind welfare staffs. The only argument or excuse I can obtain is because the blind need a guide, and this means about 10s. a week guide allowance paid by the employing agency. The people responsible for appointments cannot see that even if it costs an extra 10s. a week to employ a blind person, more than that amount is saved by non-application for domiciliary assistance. Have they no idea that what a blind person knows about the difficulties and handicap of blindness has been learned in the bitter school of practical experience, and that experience can be used to help others to battle through their new life ? A sighted person can never have that practical experience so necessary when dealing with a newly blinded person. What knowledge a sighted person has of blindness can only be obtained from books, conferences, contact with blind people, etc.

Agencies for the blind seem to forget that there are a great many blind people whom they never meet who are earning their livelihoods in many professions and businesses. Have they never heard of such men as Moon, Braille, Fawcett, Pearson, Campbell, and a thousand others who managed to earn good livelihoods and did so much for others ? Common sense tells one that both men and women should be employed as Home Visitors. We have both sexes employed by Assistance Boards, Customs and Excise, social welfare and other bodies

created for the amelioration of human suffering and poverty.

Those responsible for the higher education of the blind seem lacking in foresight. Possibly it may be said that the reason blind people are not employed as Home Visitors is because of the difficulty of getting the right type of person. But could not Worcester College and Chorley Wood College introduce a training course in Home Visiting and Teaching ? Surely we could get the right type from these colleges !

It should be remembered that a Home Visitor does not have to obtain the College of Teachers' certificate until after two years of appointment, and probably the sighted Visitors only learn what they know at the time of sitting for the examination from their contact with the blind during those two years.

The people responsible for the appointment of sighted Visitors also seem to forget that there are blind people serving on the Advisory Committee to the Ministry of Health and on the examining board of the College of Teachers, who are actually advising on the welfare of the blind and examining those employed in blind welfare work. Yet some local authorities and agencies would refuse to employ them in the actual work of visitation.

Surely now that there is a great man-power shortage, many sighted Home Visitors who are single and of service age could be released for war service and replaced by blind persons, if only temporarily. There are also a good many childless married women employed as Home Visitors who no doubt would like to take up war service if the employing agencies would release them.

Yours, etc.,
B. M.

To the Editor.

SIR,—For several years I was an honorary secretary for a men's organisation which had for one of its objects friendship with handicapped people, and during that time I very often came in contact with blind persons and noticed over and over again the view-points of these people on Home Visitors. Invariably I noticed that where they were visited by sighted visitors they never really trusted them, and mostly treated them as officials who simply visited in order to ask questions and find out all they could on the most irrelevant matters. On the other hand, I found that those visited by a blind person generally respected their visitor and looked forward to the visit because they knew their visitor was “in the same boat,” and had come to help them and give them the advantage of their practical experience.

I know to whom I should prefer to turn for understanding and sympathy if ever I lost my sight, and was in consequence oppressed with doubt and anxiety. With a blind Home Teacher I should be more certain of understanding, and I should also feel that I was protected, at least in spirit, from arbitrary regulations and restrictions, for he would be better able to appreciate my position. It seems to me that Great Britain has a great deal to learn from the U.S.A. and Canada. Every Home Teacher in Canada is a blind person, and even some of the better-paid administrative posts are held by blind persons. Some of these Canadian Blind Visitors have great distances to travel, and they are even provided with cars and chauffeurs.

If Canadian Home Visiting can be made successful entirely by a staff of Blind Visitors, I cannot understand why there is this refusal to employ Blind Visitors in this country.

Another peculiar circumstance is that, although THE NEW BEACON is a periodical dealing with blind welfare, my friends inform me that it is not published in Braille! Why, I wonder, is this? Surely a magazine published by the National Institute dealing with blind welfare should also be published in Braille, because the first and foremost function of the Institute is the welfare of the blind.

Yours, etc.,
S. J. F.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—

Sir George Anderson, C.S.I., late Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, who after his retirement in 1936 consented to become a member of the National Institute's India Committee. He gave valuable service on this Committee, and filled the gap which had been left by the death of Mr. Richey, another former Educational Commissioner, in 1934.

Tempest H. Reilly, another member of the Institute's India Committee, who, like Sir George Anderson, rendered valuable service. Mr. Reilly, as a member of the India Committee of the Church Missionary Society, was specially interested in Braille production and in the fortunes of the school for the blind at Palamcottah.

Major Sir Harry Cordeaux, formerly Governor and Commander-in-Chief of the Bahama Islands, who for more than twenty years served as the Hon. Treasurer of the Guild of Blind Gardeners.

Miss Hilda Bull, of Cottenham, Cambs, who died on June 22nd, after a short illness. She had been blind from childhood. With a sweet soprano voice and keen musical instinct, she was a prominent member of the Cottenham Choral Society which won many prizes at the Cambridge Musical Festivals, and as a soloist she was much in request at concerts for the blind and other charities. Her loss will be deeply felt by her many blind and deaf-blind correspondents.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRaille MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances:		s.	d.
19038	Box, E., and Cox, D. Out of the Dawn, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	o	6
19039	Mahoney, J. Soldier Boy from Caroline, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	o	6
19040	Styne, J. Three Dreams, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	o	6
19041	Wayne, M. Why don't you fall in love with me? <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	o	6

BRaille BOOKS.

Political:	
19069-70.	Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on the Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled Persons (Tomlinson Report). 2 vols. 6d. per vol. net.
19071-72.	Beveridge Report in Brief. 2 vols. 6d. net per vol.

Forthcoming Panda.

No. 69. France, by Pierre Maillaud. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

From 1914 to 1918 France withstood the shock of war; why did she fail to do so in 1940? The author deals with this question in the light of French history past and present, and emphasises the necessity of Anglo-French co-operation in the future. He paints the background of the collapse in terms not of backstairs scandal, but of realities. This is real history.

MOON BOOKS.

4661-4664. **Fancy Dress Ball**, by J. Farjeon. 4 vols. (Limited Edition.)

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

Philosophy:		Vols.
Desmond, S.	Reincarnation for everyman ..	3
Ward, S.	Ethics, an historical introduction ..	1
Theology:		
Niebuhr, R.	Nature and destiny of man: a Christian interpretation	5
Sociology and Politics:		
Carr, E. H.	Conditions of peace	5
Lowell, A. S.	Government of England. Part I ..	8
	Part II ..	9
	Index ..	

	Vols.
Nicholson, H. Diplomacy	3
Rathbone, E. F. The Disinherited family : a plea for family allowances	5
Thomas, I. Warfare by words	2
Education:	
Livingstone, Sir R. Education for a world adrift	2
English Language and Literature:	
Blunden, E. Thomas Hardy	4
Eckersley, C. E. (ed.). England and the English : a book for foreign students ..	5
Essays:	
Nevinson, H. W. Words and deeds	2
French:	
Kastner, L. E. (ed.). Book of French verse from Marot to Mallarmé	6
Rousseau, J.-J. Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes	3
Hebrew:	
Book of Job	1
Biography:	
Haddon, A. C. Haddon the Head Hunter, by A. H. Quiggin	2
Grey Eminence, a study in religion and politics, by A. Huxley	4
History:	
Bodley, J. E. C. France	12
Childe, G. What happened in history ..	4
Haward, E. Picture of India, its history, people and government	1
Paxson, F. L. American Civil War	2
Miscellaneous:	
Darling, F. F. Island Years	4
Hosie, Lady. A Chinese Lady : a portrait ..	5
Simpson, W. One of our pilots is safe	3
Stark, F. Winter in Arabia	4
Stegmann, J. Cambridge as it was and as it is . to-day	2
Yarsley, V. E. Plastics in the home	1

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES : 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

BLIND WELFARE SERVICE. Those aspiring to hold appointments as Home Visitors of the Blind are invited to send for details of a Scheme designed to assist students to obtain necessary Diploma. Apply (enclosing stamp) to : H. N. Vickerstaff, Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17.

HOME FOR DEAF-BLIND, HARROGATE.

N.I.B. requires services of social worker, with qualifications in hand-work, to assist in the social activities of the Home. HOME TEACHERS with interest in deaf-blind are particularly suitable. Salary £208 per annum. Apply in writing, with copies of testimonials, to Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

N.I.B. HOME FOR ADULT BLIND, TOTTERIDGE.

TEACHER for light handicrafts (mainly pastime occupation) for whole or part-time is required. Salary on the basis of £200 per annum full time, non-resident. Apply with copies of testimonials to Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

SIGHTED FEMALE HOME TEACHER for town area. State age and experience. Salary according to qualifications. Apply Secretary, South Beds. Blind Centre, Williamson Street, Luton.

ASSISTANT MISTRESS REQUIRED for September for Court Grange, Abbotskerswell, Devon, a boarding school for retarded blind boys and girls aged 7 to 16 years. (Recognised by the Board of Education.) Burnham Scale, Elementary II, with special school increment and increment for Diploma of College of Teachers of the Blind. Resident or non-resident. Previous experience with blind children not essential. Application forms from Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

ROYAL MIDLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND APPOINTMENT OF HOME TEACHER.

Applications are invited from certificated, sighted Home Teachers for an appointment in the County of Nottingham, commencing salary £180 p.a. plus appropriate war bonus. Applications stating age, qualifications, experience, and enclosing copies of testimonials should be sent to the undersigned on or before the 31st July.

A. C. V. THOMAS,
Superintendent and Secretary,

30, Chaucer Street,
Nottingham.

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL.

Two certificated sighted women home teachers required. Salary £156-£200 *per annum*, plus war bonus, 10/- per week at present; travelling expenses and also subsistence allowance, pending revision of salaries. Allowance for use of own car, to be paid in case of one applicant. Applications, stating age, experience and qualifications, to be sent to the County Medical Officer, County Hall, Kingston-on-Thames.

Notice to Advertisers.

As war conditions occasionally cause unavoidable delay in production and publication, advertisers are advised to make the closing date for receipt of applications not earlier than the 1st of the month following date of issue.

VACANCIES IN HOMES, ETC.,

30th June, 1943.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND.

Name of Home.	Vacancies.
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, East Grinstead	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Leamington ..	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Whitfield, Northumberland	—
Sunshine Home for Blind Babies, Northampton Bloomfield, Leamington	—
Wavertree House, Hove	—
The Haven, Scarborough	—
Fair Lawn, Totteridge (for convalescence or short periods of rest)	4
Home for the Deaf-Blind, Harrogate	—
Home of Rest, Green Tiles, Bigbury-on-Sea ..	—
Home of Recovery, Long Meadow, Goring ..	—
Home of Recovery, America Lodge, Torquay ..	8
Home of Recovery, Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth	9

The New BEACON

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 320.

AUGUST 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.

Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

RECONSTRUCTION OF BLIND EDUCATION

By W. McG. EAGAR, M.A.

WHAT will be the effect of the new Education Act on the existing system of Schools for the Blind? That is a question of paramount importance, to be answered in the conviction that the interests of the child come first, and that anything in the system which stands in the way of the child must go, however well it may have served its purpose in the past.

The White Paper, inasmuch as it proposes to put an end to the whole conception of elementary education, is a revolutionary document. But the revolution it proposes is a revolution of a distinctively British kind, i.e., a decisive step in evolution, the way to which has been paved by practical developments going far beyond the principles which they were supposed to express. Elementary Schools in general have long since abandoned the restrictions implied by their commission to give "efficient elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic." The significance of the White Paper is that it sets administrators and teachers finally free from the elementary idea—good enough in 1870, but hopelessly out of date in 1943—that the three "Rs," the rudimentary tools of learning, are all that the majority of children need. Under the title "*Educational Reconstruction*" it declares that the Government proposes to *recast* the national education service so as "to secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life; to ensure a fuller measure of education and opportunity for young people, and to provide means for all of developing the various talents with which they are endowed and so enriching the inheritance of the country whose citizens they are." And it goes on to emphasise that "the new educational opportunities must not, therefore, be of a single pattern. It is just as important to achieve diversity as it is to ensure equality of educational opportunity."

The question we in Blind Welfare have to answer is how some 1,500 blind children, scattered sparsely all over the country, can be assured both of equality and of diversity of educational opportunity.

The actual reference to blind children in the White Paper is cursory. Paragraph 97, "Handicapped Children," is the shortest in the whole Paper. It runs:

"Provision for the blind, and other handicapped children, is now made under Part V of the Education Act, 1921. This Part of the Act will require substantial modification."

This brevity need not discourage us. The White Paper does not purport to be final or complete. The education of handicapped children is not the only subject reserved for fuller consideration. We still await, for example, the McNair Committee's Report on the key question of the supply and training of teachers, and the Fleming Report on the Public Schools. The Board of Education have Part V in hand. Views and suggestions have been considered, and we may reasonably hope that the "substantial modification" foreshadowed will really be a "reconstruction."

It is unfortunate, however, that the, to us, vital arrangements for the education of the blind have not been outlined in the White Paper for general discussion before the Bill is drafted. We shall not know the actual proposals until the Bill is printed. I venture to suggest that they should then be considered by all parties concerned, with the emphasis not on their particular interests but on the principles and structure of a drastically reconstructed, or recast, educational system. There are bound to be diverse points of view: but there is no reason why they should not be reconciled, in the sole light of the children's benefit. Co-ordination in Blind Welfare should work towards general agreement with a view to representations being made to Parliament while the new Education Bill is being hammered into final form.

Obviously we must emphasise the right of blind children to gain as much from the new educational order as other children. That is our plain duty. But equal emphasis must be laid on the fact that the system of schools for the blind cannot be identical with, or in some important respects even similar to, that of schools for sighted children. Policy in blind education is conditioned fundamentally by the wide dispersion of the children. If blind children could be educated side by side with sighted children, in infancy going to nursery schools, in early childhood attending primary schools, and in the pre-adolescent and early adolescent stages of their growth enjoying the new choice of secondary alternatives while living at home with their parents, they would have no

need of special provision. Unfortunately the policy of exclusion from ordinary schools, "segregated education," is generally accepted as inevitable. Blind children are taken out of the ordinary run; they have for the most part to go to residential schools at a distance from their own homes. They are, educationally, a class apart. Our problem, in essence, is to make sure that they do not become a peculiar people. Even though they attend special schools they must be educated with a view to becoming normal adults, not dependent on the general public merely by reason of their blindness, but willing and able to make full individual contributions to the social and cultural life of the community.

The danger is that we may be content to say "Educational reconstruction implies a local complex of schools graded according to age, ability and interests, from which blind children are necessarily excluded. Schools for the blind are residential institutions for the most part, each serving a number of educational areas; and we can do little more than get rid of the weaker schools, concentrate children in the bigger, and apply the new ideas so far as we can, while respecting the traditions and the practice of the past." Educational reconstruction must be more drastic than that. Schools for the blind have already in important particulars fallen behind schools for sighted children. Their pupils have not yet benefited by the Hadow Scheme, and it is evident that they will not benefit by the Butler proposals, if they are pinned down erratically to fixed points located purely by the accidents of social history. Blind children cannot be given the same chance as sighted children of primary education branching into three types of secondary education designed to meet diverse capacities, aptitudes and interests, unless drastic steps are taken to deal with traditional attachments which obstruct the development of a logical and practical system of schools for the blind—and, let it be added, of schools for those partially sighted children who cannot profit fully by sighted methods of education.

We owe a great debt of respect and admiration to the people who founded and have carried on schools in the determination that their own locality should lead the way in educating its own blind children. But we may guess that those very men and women would be the first to take the wider view now opened up. They thought locally because local action alone was possible in their days. As things have developed, local thinking becomes a vice. That vice affects more than the location of schools; it may extend to the function of Education

Authorities in the new system. Some blind children live in a Local Education Authority area in which a school for the blind is situated; some are unfortunate enough to live where mistaken local patriotism has induced the Authority to maintain some small Day Centre for blind children which, merely by reason of available numbers, must be educationally inefficient. The majority live in areas in which no school for the blind is situated, so that their education has to be provided for in another area. The provision of schools for the blind is not in fact a general function of Education Authorities. Their responsibility is that laid down in Section 52 "to enable blind . . . children resident in their area . . . to obtain that education in some school for the time being certified by the Board of Education as suitable for providing that education." They may be able to choose between different schools outside their own areas; or they may virtually be compelled to send their children to one particular school for the blind because it is the only one within reasonable reach.

What really concerns the Education Authorities is not that they should have a choice of schools of the same type in different localities, but a choice of schools of different types suitable for the age and capacity of each child who comes under their care. If the provision of schools for the blind is not a general function of Education Authorities, there is no particular reason that it should be a function of any one of them. Schools for the blind are not part of any local system of schools; they must be part of the national scheme.

In this, indeed, lies the greatness of our present opportunity. The White Paper recognises that the enrichment of the lives of the nation's children necessitates a larger measure of central direction. The Board of Education, for the first time in its somewhat hesitating history, is to require Education Authorities to submit comprehensive plans for the development of their whole service, and it will issue Orders based on the plan submitted and in effect make them statutory. Who is to submit a plan for the development of the national service of education for blind children?

It would be repugnant to the spirit of our national institutions, and unwarrantably divergent from the analogy indicated above, that the Board itself should plan and direct; its function is to advise and enforce, and it should be limited to that, even if in the first instance it has to nominate and constitute the responsible agency. A Central Body for the Education

of the Blind could be constituted on the lines of the Development Commission and numerous other Boards and Commissions created in the last quarter-century to perform tasks of public importance, with corollary powers of spending public and private funds. (The Public Corporation proposed by the Tomlinson Report for the development and direction of Workshops for the Disabled is a good and relevant instance.) The C.B.E.B. would act on behalf of the Education Authorities generally and of the Trustees and Managers of all schools for the blind. The national Associations of education committees and educationists would be represented on it, together with representatives of the Trustees and Managers of schools for the blind and experts in the problem of educating blind children. It should be incorporated so that it may administer funds which will be released by the closing of redundant schools whose Trusts should properly be diverted to purposes akin to their original intention. In relation to blind children it would act precisely as Local Education Authorities act towards unhandicapped children in their areas, i.e., it would plan developments in accordance with the new Education Act and the new conception of education, and carry out the plan in accordance with an Order of the Board of Education. As the Local Education Authorities will now have to provide or ensure the provision of suitable primary schools for all their children, with subsequent choice of secondary schools of Grammar, Technical and Modern types, together with continued education in Young People's Colleges and voluntary organisations in the Service of Youth Scheme, so the C.B.E.B. will have to provide or ensure the provision of suitable primary and secondary schools for all blind, and partially blind, children wherever their homes may be.

The establishment of a Central Body would, of course, mean some measure of compulsion, or at least certain restrictions. That is no argument against it. Education itself is a compulsory privilege. The liberty of school managers to provide what they like and attract whom they can must always be conditioned by the rights of the children and the duty of the community towards them. In point of fact no one seriously defends the existing system of blind education as a whole. The definition of educational blindness needs rephrasing. More schools for retarded blind children are needed. Better grading of blind children generally is required. Earlier selection for secondary education is imperative. Earlier ascertainment of blindness, and earlier entry to schools of some

kind—that is, of the right kind for each child—is essential. Much better provision should be made for partially sighted children who require education in residential schools but do not need to use Braille. These are only some of the things which need doing now. Every one who is engaged in Blind Welfare is aware of them, but all their efforts to put things right are delayed or nullified by lack of unified study and central direction. The C.B.E.B.—which I have here sketched in outline—seems to me the logical application to our problem of the principles of administration envisaged by the White Paper, and the only means by which the

advantages of the new educational policy can be secured for blind children. I have no authority to speak for anyone but myself—that is why this article is signed!—but the general idea seems to emerge whenever serious students discuss the education of handicapped children. We do nothing drastic in this beloved country of ours until it is proved to be necessary. Is some measure of central planning and central direction necessary? If it is, is there a better means than a National Board, or Central Body constituted and authorised to act as here suggested?

HOME NEWS

Proposed Home and Sick Bay in Norwich.—

The Norwich Institution for the Blind are informed that the Norfolk Public Health and Assistance Committee, after consideration of a memorandum prepared by Mr. Fanthorpe, Superintendent and Secretary of the Institution, are in favour of the provision of a Central Area Home and Sick Bay for aged blind persons. A home with 50 to 70 beds is visualised, and it could be built in the grounds of the Institution without causing congestion.

Royal Midland Institution Centenary Celebrations.—The Duchess of Portland presided at the centenary celebrations and annual meeting of the Royal Midland Institution for the Blind on 27th July. Congratulating the blind workers on the amount of work of national importance they had achieved during the year, the Duchess said it must be a great comfort to them to feel that, far from being cut off from the national effort, they were doing more for it than many sighted persons.

The centenary was marked by the unveiling of a memorial tablet to the Duchess, and Mr. Charles Fletcher, who entered the Institution when he was six years old, presented the Duchess with a basket, brushes, and other articles made by the blind.

Hollins Memorial Fund.—We again draw the attention of our readers to the fund which has been instituted to establish a memorial to the late Dr. Alfred Hollins, in the form of an annual scholarship to a blind student of the organ and a prize for the best original organ composition. Subscriptions may be sent to the Hon. Treasurer, Mr. William D. Leask, National Bank of Scotland, 81, Princes Street, Edinburgh. Although the organisation is rightly being carried out in

Scotland, help will be given by the English branches of the Incorporated Association of Organists, who are represented on the Executive; and there is an English sub-committee consisting of Mr. G. D. Cunningham, Dr. Thalben Ball, Mrs. W. B. Woodrow (a fellow student of Hollins) and the Editor of the *Musical Times*. The most fitting means of assisting the fund is an organ recital with one or two of Hollins's pieces in the programme.

The War's Effect on Eyes.—During the past year there have been 20,000 more attendances than on the previous year at St. Paul's Eye Hospital, Liverpool, and 300 more operations. In giving these figures at the 71st annual meeting of the hospital, held at the Town Hall, last month, with the Lord Mayor (Alderman R. Duncan French) presiding, the chairman of the hospital, Mr. Stanley E. Gordon, said the expenses had increased but so had the income as a result of contributory schemes.

Mr. Gordon told a press representative that the increased attendances were, in his opinion, in no small measure due to the war. People are suffering from overstrain, the effects of the blackout, working in darkened rooms and trying to read in badly lighted trains and trams. All these are contributory factors, in addition to actual accidents to eyes in factories, etc.

New Hostel for Hampshire Blind.—Because it has become increasingly difficult for blind persons to obtain suitable lodging, Hampshire County Council has made financial provision to enable the County Association for the Care of the Blind to provide a hostel for 20 or 30 blind persons. The Association, from their voluntary funds, are prepared to contribute £1,500, and they estimated the annual cost for the

first complete year at about £2,000. The County Finance Committee have been authorised to spend up to £6,500 on the purchase of premises for a hostel.

A New "Ophthalmic" Camera.—Wing Commander Harold Pearce, director of photography at the Royal Canadian Air Force Headquarters, has been elected a Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain for his part in the invention of a new "ophthalmic" camera developed by the R.C.A.F. for studying vitamin deficiencies of the eyes.

As a result of studies with the camera, R.C.A.F. medical officers have established that airmen who finish flights rubbing their eyes, which feel tired and watery, often suffer from a lack of vitamin B₂, or riboflavin. In order to inspect men's eyes and obtain a permanent record of examinations, a special camera was designed by Wing Commander Pearce and Flying Officer M. J. Sym, an authority on microscopic camera work at the University of Manitoba, who worked out the technical details for a 2,000,000-watt bulb which flashes for a split second into an eye camera.

A New Mechanical Aid to Teaching Sighted and Sightless.—The Synchrophone is an electrically-driven equipment invented by Mr. N. Sandor, Managing Director of I. S. M., Ltd., London. It is a sound unit which delivers a lecture, and at the same time throws pictures on a screen which can be viewed comfortably in full daylight, the whole effect being a synchronised sound and sight educational course. A device on which Mr. Sandor is working enables those without their sight to trace the illustrations on the screen with their hands. A conducting material is used to energise the surface of the image slightly. General direction of the "illustration" to which attention is called is given by a buzz or other sound.

Ben Purse Testimonial Fund.—A Fund has recently been opened by the National Association of Blind Workers for the purpose of making a presentation to Mr. Ben Purse in order to give practical expression to the esteem in which he is held by all workers on behalf of the blind. The services which Mr. Purse has rendered to the cause of blind welfare throughout his life are undoubtedly such as to merit tangible recognition from all whom he has so materially assisted, and his record of strenuous labour and achievement is too well known to need any special pleading. So many other organisations and individuals not directly connected with the N.A.B.W. have expressed a desire to co-operate that it has been decided to invite subscriptions

from all who may wish to support the effort. Amongst these, there are bound to be many readers of THE NEW BEACON, which has had the privilege for many years of including Mr. Purse among its most valued contributors.

The subscription list will remain open until December 31st next, and all contributions should be sent to Miss D. Cleaver, Secretary, National Association of Blind Workers, 4, Aldred Road, West Hampstead, London, N.W.6.

New Essex County Home at Bury St. Edmunds.—Owing to the death of Mr. J. A. Fielden, the owner of the Holmewood Estate, Peterborough, the Essex County Association for the Blind has had to find new accommodation for their blind women. This they have succeeded in doing at Bury St. Edmunds, where they have been fortunate enough to secure a very fine furnished house with a beautiful garden in a central position. They have also been fortunate in securing the services of an excellent cook and all necessary domestic help. Much local interest and sympathy have already been shown in the scheme and everything points to a very happy future for this much needed Home.

Placement in Middlesex.—Forty-six blind men and women, the majority of whom were previously classified as unemployable, are now engaged on industrial process work in Middlesex. This result has been achieved through the energy of the Middlesex Association for the Blind, advised on technical matters by the Placement Officer of the National Institute for the Blind. The workers are employed in 16 factories engaged, in the main, on aircraft and munitions production.

In this campaign particular emphasis has been laid on the need for selecting processes at which the blind can achieve a level of production which, under peace-time conditions, will secure for them a living wage. In one small firm, for example, 17 blind men are employed on inspection work, on the operation of power presses, single purpose lathes and drilling machines. This number represents six per cent. of the total personnel of the factory, and the management has given an undertaking to continue the employment of these men after the war, so long as they keep up their present high level of production.

The National Institute has kept a close check on production rates, and a number of the firms concerned supply progress reports regularly on the work done by their blind operatives. There have been remarkably few failures, and these reports on the whole bear witness to the fact that

the blind are achieving a bonus rate level of production, and that their employment presents no special problems for the management. In this connection the Labour Manager of Messrs. D. Napier & Son., Ltd., writes:—

“We have been amazed with the quick manner in which they (ten blind men) have adapted themselves to their particular work, and with their thoroughness in doing it. The burr filers are extremely good and do not have any rejections, and they earn very good bonuses.”

In addition to the workers already mentioned, a number of blind persons from the London area have found work in Middlesex. Demand for blind labour continues to grow, and the main problem now is rather to find suitable billets than to find suitable work.

Post-War Education.—The Liberal National Council has published a report on the education of the adolescent as an individual and a citizen. Its title is “Junior Colleges” (price 6d.) and

it constitutes the first report of the Education Advisory Committee set up by the Liberal National Post-War Study Group. The chairman of this Committee is Mr. W. McG. Eagar, Secretary-General of the National Institute for the Blind, who contributes an article on the Reconstruction of Blind Education to this issue of *THE NEW BEACON*.

FOREIGN NEWS

“Only Allah Can Cure...”—Recently a medical party from the cruiser “Dauntless” was put ashore at a town in south-eastern Arabia, to cope with a dangerous epidemic of smallpox. The surgeon-lieutenant had to remove one of a child’s eyes in order to save the sight of the other, and soon after ten blind men appeared asking to have their sight restored. The diplomatic doctor assured them in solemn tones: “Only Allah can cure the blind,” and they departed satisfied.

SOME REFLECTIONS ON THE TOMLINSON REPORT—II

By R. TATLOW

(Concluded)

IN a blind employment factory daily under my notice four trades are followed. The same trades were followed by our ancestors of hundreds of years ago with much the same methods as still in use to-day. As against the developed technique and complexity of many modern industries these remain primitive. Primitive, they chiefly attract the more primitive of our people. The large establishments in these trades are mostly located in rural districts or where wage levels are comparatively low. Nevertheless, these trades do call for a definite kind of skilled craftsmanship and, because of the relatively low wage rates, for application and hard work to earn a living. (For the sake of exactness, it should be interpolated that, since the introduction of a protective tariff and the firm rise of trade unionism, the evil of low wages is being steadily combated.)

It would be absurd to maintain that the blind operative is the equal of one who can see. Hand and eye are normally wedded in the one task; divorce them, and the hand must suffer. Yet, with reasonable supervision, the products of

these blind workpeople are quite fit for the open market. Earnings do not exceed about fifty per cent. of those of the sighted operative when each is as diligent as the other. Even results so good are only obtainable through the judicious selection of promising people and the rejection of the unlikely.

We may say, then, that all-round fitness for the work and industrious application to it produce for the blind worker a fifty per cent. level of economic earnings and an output of competitive goods fit for the open market.

We have, too, some only partially successful people. These blind employees come of working people—some from families of skilled craftsmen, some from the unskilled and labouring class. These latter, had they been able to see, would normally have become unskilled labourers. When we bring them into our factory and attempt to turn them into skilled craftsmen (a status they would never have reached as sighted people), if our hopes are partly disappointed, we may hesitate to reproach them.

Where a blind man can do a piece of work reasonably well, a partially sighted man does it no better. In such instances, indeed, we constantly observe that our best workmen are totally blind.

Paragraph 9 of the Report postulates that, "In a highly industrialised country like Great Britain... there is employment for all." I have long felt that:—

(1) If those numerous blind people now in our special workshops, continually exerting notable skill and untiring industry in some primitive pursuit, could be found the opportunity to fit in somewhere within the framework of the many higher grade industries of the country, their merit would obtain a better reward than is now possible and they would have less need to summon the charitable to their assistance.

(2) If the less successful—though not less willing—of our blind workpeople could be given some of those simpler tasks in wider industrial fields, they also might more nearly approach to making good.

(3) In giving effect to (1) and (2) the scope of industrial possibility for blind people in general would be greatly expanded.

(4) Blind people, such as are suitable, should be much more encouraged and financially helped to enter the distributive trades; whether selling newspapers, minding a kiosk, running a shop, etc., would depend upon the individual.

(5) It is in the intellectual field that the competent blind person can best succeed, whether in art, scholarship, or practical administrative work. As with sighted people, so, I think—not more so—is it with the blind: these are a small minority. In this connection the National Institute has produced some very arresting statistics, proving that the percentage of passes and honours at the university is actually better for the blind than for the sighted. Generous opportunities for advanced education should be free to young blind people in whom we are sure we discern the character and inherent ability to make good. Quite dispassionately surveying this question: we may send a blind man into a special factory to work hard for forty years for a fifty per cent. return to himself for his struggles, and we help him to the extent, say, of sixty pounds a year. In the end, we have spent £2,400 to help him. Had we been reasonably assured of the ultimate result it would have been a sound investment to spend all the £2,400 in a first few years to educate that man to earn £2,401 during the rest of his life. Were we to spend £5,000 that he might then earn £5,001, that would still be a sound investment. Whenever and wherever such an

opportunity arises, it should be seized and exploited, for the beneficent result does not stop there. It may insinuate itself indefinitely into the lives of an unknowable number of other people, and indefinitely into the future of the nation at large.

The blind distributive worker may also frequently achieve ultimate independence; but the average blind manual worker seems likely always to stand in need of more or less help. I am disposed to agree with paragraph 70 of the Report, that it would be more salutary to give to the employer, rather than to the employee, any compensation for disability. It should be such an amount that the employer could afford to pay the blind workman what he would pay any ordinary workman for the same work.

While I believe the profit motive must continue to be the driving force in industry, I also believe that industry can be controlled to that point necessary to implement the Report, for control would apply equally to all competitors, and so the general industrial placement of the blind could be effected.

The objective for the blind, as for other disabled people, should be their placement in ordinary industry. Any case for special workshops would emerge from experience; but I anticipate that the high grade of workman now employed in such workshops would disappear from them, giving place to those now found to be unemployable there.

In addition to the Compulsory Quota Scheme, the Report contemplates the scheduling of certain occupations to be reserved to the disabled. Obviously, any kind of work now commonly and efficiently performed by the blind could be so scheduled for them, eliminating sighted competition for such work; and if it were actually coupled to the quota system it would come under ordinary competitive trade influences, by which the public interest would be safeguarded against irresponsible and inefficient administration.

The Report suggests that the labour of such people as are employed in sheltered establishments should be confined to the production of utility goods rather than articles of luxury. We are unlikely, I think, to ban luxury. If the disabled can produce these goods, even though the State help the disabled, why not? And if some such luxury article were found suitable for scheduling—still more, why not?

In so far, then, as the Report will affect the blind, it seems clear that its implementation must mean that the grand and not unfruitful work of the many earnest volunteers for so many years in the face of great difficulties is to

be crowned with a final success as profuse as any of their wildest dreams. Given the backing demanded by the Report, and in view of many established facts, the employment of ordinary capable blind persons in general industry appears by no means impracticable. Many now deemed to be human scrap will be brought back to active life, and some real value, and into those blessings money cannot buy. The average status of the blind will be considerably improved, materially and socially. Many local authorities, now too apathetic, will be astonished to find themselves doing under compulsion a great deal which they might voluntarily do here and now.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

The Blind and the New Public Assistance Act.

Circular 2833, entitled *Public Assistance and Welfare of the Blind Pensions and Determination of Needs Act 1943* (H.M. Stationery Office, price 1d.) has been issued to Local Authorities by the Ministry of Health, and draws attention to the provisions in the Act which will affect the blind.

Section 1 (Blind Persons) enacts that in future a blind person may have £400 (instead of £300) of capital assets in addition to any war savings which are disregarded by virtue of the Determination of Needs Act 1941 without being rendered ineligible for financial assistance; every complete £25 of such capital assets after the first will be treated as equivalent to a weekly income of 6d. (instead of a shilling).

Section 2 (Outdoor Relief) substitutes £400 for £300 as the maximum of capital assets which it is lawful, but not compulsory, for the Council to observe in granting outdoor relief, and substitutes 6d. for 1s. as the weekly income to which every complete £25 after the first is to be treated as equivalent.

Section 3 (Outdoor Relief and Blind Persons) Subsection (1) provides that where a blind person assisted financially is a member of a household the rules in the first Schedule of the Determination of Needs Act 1941 shall apply as they do to an applicant for supplementary pension, but rules 2 and 3 (a) will not apply, unless the Council so determines.

An appendix to the circular gives the rules for determining the need and assessing the needs of such applicants.

Subsection (2) provides that an order for the maintenance of a poor person over 16 may not be enforced against a member of the same house-

hold other than husband or wife.

Section 4 (Outdoor Relief) includes widows in receipt of widows' pensions with allowances for children in the category of those eligible for supplementary pensions.

Section 5 (Blind Persons) Sub-section (1) provides that financial assistance provided by the Local Authority under the Blind Persons Acts shall not be taken into account when assessing means of a blind person for the purposes of the Old Age Pensions Act 1936. The effect of this is that the Local Authority will be responsible for deciding the amount up to which a blind person's income shall be raised by financial assistance, and their decision will not affect the blind person's pension.

Social Security.

Social Security (edited by W. A. Robson and published for the Fabian Society by George Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 15s. net) is a symposium, to which experts examine the existing arrangements for providing pensions, insurance benefits, allowances and compensation to the wage-earner and his dependants, and—this examination made—discuss the fundamental of a social security scheme in the light of the Beveridge Report. The contributors include Mrs. Clarke (the Research Secretary of the Fabian Society) who, with the Editor, bore the brunt of the work, Mrs. Rackham (who writes on Unemployment Insurance), Mr. Marshall (on Public Assistance), Mr. R. W. B. Clarke (on The Beveridge Report and After), and others. The chapter on Blind Welfare in England and Wales has been written by Mr. Eagar, Secretary-General of the National Institute for the Blind, and follows the general line of the earlier part of the memorandum he submitted to the Beveridge Committee, which appeared in the *New Beacon* for June, 1942. In accordance with the general principles governing the earlier part of the symposium, the chapter does not attempt proposals for reorganisation, but outlines the system of blind welfare as it exists to-day.

One of the most interesting chapters in the second part of the book is that contributed by Mrs. Clarke on the staff problem. However attractive Social Security sounds on paper, it will be judged not only by the generosity of its benefits and the competence of its administration, but by the spirit of its staff; it is mediated through people dealing with people, and any attempt to interfere with the lives of men on so vast a scale can only be accepted if the old-fashioned virtues of courtesy and respect for the individual persist.

“ A TERRIBLE AFFLICTION ”

By W. H. COATES

VIII. (Conclusion)—The “ Terrible Affliction ”

THIS is a phrase borrowed from the lips of many good people who are sympathetic but ill-informed. It may have been true in days when blindness reduced many of its victims to beggary. Even now the plight of the so-called unemployables is not enviable, but even for them the words must have lost some of their force, while to many of us they seem a fantastic overstatement.

But there is a real question involved: How far, and in which direction, is blindness likely to affect happiness? To give a logical and general answer would take up far too much space; we must be content with a rough estimate, and confine ourselves to the one case which has provided the material for the foregoing chapters.

There are many grades of happiness, from that of the feeding-trough to that of the mystic. In each grade two conditions are necessary—harmony within the mind (which presupposes harmony with the world too), and full scope for one's energies (which does not necessarily mean the removal of all obstacles by someone else).

The first effect of blindness upon life is direct and practical, and seems to destroy the second of our conditions straight away. It is the limitation of bodily activity. On the other hand it makes difficulties which can be overcome by those who will. It calls for more effort—more concentration in living. It cost Tom more to climb a tree than it cost a seeing boy. But the satisfaction of having done a thing is proportional to the effort of doing it.

Tom's early life was passed in conditions which favoured physical freedom. In manhood again he was lucky, for he found a congenial profession by means of which he was eventually able to support himself and a wife and two children.

In the æsthetic life too the blind would seem to come off badly, being denied that order of perception in which the seeing live most abundantly. It is odd that Tom seldom felt this. For him the world was well stocked with things to hear and feel and smell. Perhaps the truth is that the seeing have far more than they can appreciate. Most people are unobservant, and scarcely pay any attention at all to their other senses. One man sits at a banquet so rich that he can only taste a few of the dishes; the other

has a more frugal table, but sufficient for a substantial and tasty meal. If this diner is less pampered by tit-bits than the other, his palate is more discriminating and less jaded.

Where blindness threatened Tom's happiness most seriously, was in its indirect results—in its effect upon those seeing people with whom he had to deal. Moreover, such wholesale remedies as exist are difficult to apply and slow to operate. We cannot solve the problem by inventing a new piece of special apparatus. But the problem differs from one individual to another. If Tom had been less sensitive and more self-assured, he would not have been so much bothered by it. He often had to resist a tendency to seek the company of his fellow-blind in preference to that of others. It was not that he thought he ought to forego that pleasure, but he knew that he would have to run the gauntlet of the world in order to reach a wider outlook and a larger field of action, and bring a richer experience to bear upon his work.

One important point has not hitherto been brought out: It was Tom's blindness which secured him his education. In his schooldays ordinary children had not even the facilities they have now, but funds and societies already existed to supply a good education to any blind child who seemed likely to justify it. If Tom had had his sight he would probably have got nothing more than an elementary schooling. He would have remained a villager with a villager's attainments. His musical flair might have expressed itself through the mouth-organ or the accordion. He would have spent his life on the land or in some mass-production works.

We cannot assume out of hand that education makes for happiness. You may start mental conflicts by educating a boy out of the culture of his home and friends; you may cause a feeling of frustration by developing faculties which he cannot exercise afterwards, and by awakening ambitions which he cannot begin to realise. But you do give him a fuller life. You increase his value to the community in many ways, you enable him to organise his life to some extent, and you give him interests outside his economic cares. The balance will probably be on the credit side. With Tom it certainly was. To him the mere study and practice of his

art gave great and lasting pleasure and in addition he could earn a living by it.

Blindness restricts range but not energy. In all directions it necessitates slower and more difficult methods, thus calling upon greater patience and effort. It cuts out the distractions of the visible. All this must surely favour concentration, perseverance, specialisation, singleness of purpose: in the extreme case, fanaticism and crankiness.

If now the blind man finds some ideal which suits his bent—something greater than himself—something beyond the “Changes and chances of this mortal life,” he will pursue it and devote himself to it. His whole inner life will be grouped around it. It may be some conception or complex of conceptions in art, conduct, politics, religion. In Tom’s case it was music. Music to him became a kind of divinity. To contemplate it and serve it were his chief desires. In its presence he was happy and serene. So long as he had it, nothing that happened to him could trouble him overmuch, for “Perfect love casteth out fear.” It alone was a possession which he would not have exchanged for the keenest pair of eyes in the world.

The Elderly Blind : What Can They Do ?

Owing to pressure on space, the fifth article of this series, entitled “In the Laboratory,” is not included in this issue but will be included in the September issue.

PERSONALIA

Mr. R. B. HUGHES-BULLER, C.I.E., C.B.E., who for many years has given invaluable service to the National Institute for the Blind as a Member of its Executive Council and as its Honorary Estates Adviser, has, on his resignation, been appointed a Vice-President of the Institute.

* * * *

MISS A LEES, Matron of the Thomasson Memorial School for the Blind, Bolton, is retiring at the end of this month after 15 years of devoted service. As the school closed on August 6th for the summer holiday, various presentations were made to Miss Lees from the blind and deaf children and the teaching and domestic staffs as a token of their affection and appreciation.

On July 26th, an interesting ceremony was held at the James Graham Open-Air School, Old Farnley, Leeds, now occupied by the partially sighted and deaf children who were originally at Blenheim Walk, to mark the occasion of the retirement of two teachers after long and devoted service.

MISS M. V. LESTER, Senior Mistress, began as a pupil-teacher at the Blind School in Albion Street in 1898, and after two years at Training College, returned to the school which had then removed to Blenheim Walk. She has also served on the Executive Committee and as an examiner for the College of Teachers of the Blind. Numbers of blind people remember with gratitude her early tuition and never-failing interest in their careers after school life.

She was presented with a wireless set and cheque from the old pupils; a walnut occasional table and reading-lamp from the staffs of the School-past and present; a carved oak tea-tray from the children of the School; and a book engraved with the names of all the friends who had contributed to the presents.

MISS E. M. POWELL, Assistant Mistress, joined the staff at Blenheim Walk in 1912, and many old pupils are grateful to recall the thorough final preparation they received from her before proceeding to higher education. She was presented with a cheque from members of the home and teaching staffs past and present; and a Wedgwood coffee-pot, and blue and white china tea-pot from the children of the school.

* * * *

THE WORLD OF THE BLIND

By DAVID MORGAN

'Tis a curious world, when all light has died,
With never a sight, only sound to guide,
The whirr of a car as it passes by,
The sound of an aeroplane up in the sky,
The bark of a dog, the song of the lark,
We list to them all, as we pass in the dark,
The welcome voices of friends who call—
These are the sounds that never pall.

The clasp of the hand, the click of the thumb;
It has been to many a real “Drake’s Drum”:
Calling us out of ourselves, in the dark,
To be up and at it, to get on the mark,
To do and be just something again,
And prove our lives are not all in vain.

And so we ponder, as we sit and wait,
For the patter of feet, the click of the gate
Of this curious world, where the light has died,
And there’s never a sight, only sound to guide.

BLIND CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF FIVE

THE number of blind children in England and Wales under the age of five was, as is well known, declining steadily in the first half of the 1930 decade. Since 1936, however, the fall in numbers has been arrested and a tendency to rise again is now manifest. The figures in the last ten years are :—

1933	..	244	1936	..	206	1940	..	195
1934	..	231	1937	..	196	1941	..	201
1935	..	216	1938	..	195	1942	..	201
			1939	..	172 (without Wales)			

No official figures have yet been published for the year ending March, 1943, but an inquiry recently carried out by the National Institute for the Blind has given a return of 216. There is not yet reason for serious anxiety. The fact, however, that there has been of late a marked increase in the demand for accommodation in Sunshine Homes makes it worth while to ask a few questions and that the National Institute for the Blind has been doing.

After consultation with the Ministry of Health, the National Institute addressed a letter in the early spring of this year to local authorities and voluntary agencies, calling attention to the increased demand for accommodation in the Sunshine Homes, and asking for certain information for the guidance of the Institute's Council ; were the four Homes now open at East Grinstead, Whitfield Hall, near Hexham, Leamington and Northampton, together with the fifth shortly to be opened at Northwood likely to meet that demand ? The letter asked some specific questions :—

1. How many registered blind children under the age of five were on the books of the Association or Local Authority concerned ?
2. How many of these children were in Sunshine Homes or on the waiting list of such Homes ?
3. How many were in other Homes, and how many living in the care of their parents ? How many of these were ineligible, by reason of physical or mental defect, for admission to Sunshine Homes ? Of those with their parents, was it considered that the home conditions were suitable ?
4. How many children in the area concerned were not registered as blind, but were possibly suffering from such defect of vision as to be registrable ?
5. Had any increase in infantile blindness been observed in recent years ?

In spite of the present pressure of work in offices and the shortage of staff that makes any questionnaire even more unwelcome than usual to-day, the response to the letter was extremely good and only one area (and that a very small one, with a Blind Register that totalled less than 100 persons in all) failed to reply. The following is a summary of the replies received relating to the number of blind infants on the Registers :—

Areas having no blind children	57	Areas having 7 blind children	3
Areas having 1 blind child ..	28	„ 8 „	1
Areas having 2 blind children	22	„ 9 „	1
„ 3 „	9	„ 15 „	1
„ 4 „	6	„ 20 „	1
„ 5 „	4		

It may be of interest to give the names of the 57 areas returning no blind children of under five years. They were : Accrington, Barnsley, Barrow, Bath, Birkenhead, Bolton, Boston and Holland, Bournemouth, Brecon, Brighton, Burton, Bury (Lancs.), Canterbury, Cardigan, Carmarthen, Chester, Colne, Croydon, Cumberland, Darlington, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Eastbourne, Exeter, Halifax, Hamp-

shire (one blind baby registered since return), Heywood, Hunts., Isle of Ely, Lincoln (city), Lincs. (Kesteven and Sleaford), Merthyr Tydvil, Norwich, Nottingham (City), Oldham, Oxford (City), Peterborough, Portsmouth, Reading, Rotherham, St. Helens, Salford, Shropshire, Southend, Southport, Staffs., Stockport, West Suffolk, West Sussex, Tynemouth, Wallasey, Warrington, West Hartlepool, Westmorland, Wolverhampton, Worcester (City), York (City).

The number of children under five in the Sunshine Homes was returned as 68, and another 29 were at the time of the inquiry either awaiting admission or under consideration; 8 children were stated to be in other Homes—sometimes in such a Home as the Ellen Terry, specifically for blind children, and sometimes in Mental Institutions or Epileptic Colonies.

The return showed that 111 children were living at home, and it was satisfactory to learn that in the majority of cases the parents were said to be giving them every care. No one would deny that the mother who can spare time for the upbringing of her blind child, and who has the special gifts of knowledge, understanding and common sense which will enable her to give that child the pre-school training needed, is the best person to undertake the task. But—and it is a pretty big “but”—such mothers are very rare, and it is fairly safe to say that the blind pre-school child can, as a rule, receive in the Sunshine Homes more individual attention, better training, fuller preparation for school-life and more skilled treatment in every respect, than can be offered by the average home from which our blind babies are drawn.

Of the children living with their parents, 38 were suffering from physical, mental, or physical and mental defects which made them unsuitable for admission to a Sunshine Home.

Of the only two areas returning more than 10 blind children, one was a county borough, where 20 children were registered—not a surprisingly large number in view of the large blind population concerned. The other, returning 15 blind children under five, was rural; here the blind babies were 1.6 per hundred of the blind population—a percentage which the Secretary of the County Association concerned rightly described as “tragic,” for an area which for many years had no blind babies on its Register. She stated that 4 of them are mentally defective and another 4 both physically and mentally defective. It is suggested that evacuation is responsible at least in part for the very high figure: “These babies were born in various maternity homes in the country, but things had gone too far to give them much help on arrival.”

In almost every return the answer “No” was given to the inquiry whether any increase had been noted in the numbers of blind infants. There were, however, 41 children returned as being under observation, and possibly registrable, though not registered. In some of these there was good reason to hope that, after further treatment, sight would be gained, and in a few instances the children concerned were of such low mentality that it was difficult to ascertain whether they were really blind.

The National Institute in its inquiry commented on the present increase in venereal disease, and stated its apprehension lest this might be responsible for an increase in infant blindness. Where in replies this question was touched upon, it was generally stated that up to the present no increase in infantile blindness had been observed from this cause.

THE EDITOR.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Are Ears Dependable?

SIR,—Will you allow me a little space in which to reply to your correspondent who signs himself “The Candidate on the Right”?

First, I want to apologise to the candidate to whom I made reference in my article in the June issue of THE NEW BEACON when giving my experiences at the examination for Craft Instructors. I am sorry if I have given him cause for annoyance, and seek to assure him that my intention was not to belittle him or any other candidate, but simply to tell just how

my practised hearing assisted me on that day of examination.

Your correspondent's letter is headed with the question, “Are Ears Dependable?” to which I venture to essay an answer.

Provided the necessary circumstances prevail at the time when the ears can be expected to function in a normal manner, I unhesitatingly suggest that ears are dependable. For instance, provided the telephone system is in good working order we can with certainty receive and send messages, and telephonists are usually possessed of dependable hearing. Again, the use of the

stethoscope is well known to all of us. But it is reasonable to suppose that persons who through much practice become accustomed to using their ears under these given circumstances would not find equal dependability when using their ears in less familiar fields.

At the time when I sat for the examination for Craft Instructors my ears were not deceived to the extent your correspondent would have us believe. There were two certificates gained on that occasion, and the candidate to whom I referred in my article was not one of the fortunate two. In point of fact, the man on my left was the other successful candidate, and I understand that it was not until a subsequent sitting that the other candidate gained the certificate. The fact that he eventually made good speaks well for his powers of persistence, and I would like to take this opportunity of offering my congratulations to him.

In conclusion, I would like to offer a little advice to any partially, and, in particular, to any totally blind aspirants to the Craft Instructor's Diploma, and that is, not to attempt the examination unless there are years of workshop practice behind the would-be candidate, or unless special instruction has been given under a qualified Instructor.

Further, this examination cannot be compared with the test for Home Teachers. This is a much higher test in certain subjects. But, in our case, we must know that we have to satisfy examiners of our ability as first-rate workmen and teachers. For my own part, I would not have attempted the examination unless there were sound reasons for knowing that I knew my job; remember, a blind man cannot afford to fail.

Yours, etc.,

F. BURVILLE.

To the Editor.

Blind or Sighted Home Visitors.

SIR,—The letters of "B. M." and "S. J. F." in your July issue appear to me each to contain at least one major statement that requires denial, though they also express a great deal with which every worker in Blind Welfare must have complete sympathy.

"B. M." states: "The only argument or excuse I can obtain (for the refusal to employ Blind Home Visitors) is because the blind need a guide, and this means about 10s. a week guide allowance paid by the employing agency." I am quite convinced that this is not either the main, or the only, difficulty. Whether the Home Visitors are expected to be little more than "*officials*" in the narrowest sense of the

term, whose duties consist in a ceaseless round of investigation into financial circumstances, or endless filling-up of forms, and a struggle to produce a record of an inordinate number of visits or to achieve an impossible minimum imposed by the employing agency, or whether they are in very truth "*friendly visitors*," whose desire is to combine the inevitable financial investigations with the widest interpretation of personal service (and all that that may mean), a blind person, although possessing the undoubted advantage, if one may use such a word in that connection, of sharing the disability of those whom he or she is visiting, has a handicap that is by no means to be written off simply as "needing a guide." Any experienced Home Visitor will know how infinite are the varieties of service given (and appreciated!) which are either impossible or difficult of achievement without sight, as will any person of sympathy and vision holding what "B. M." calls "well-paid executive appointments on blind welfare staffs." And I would venture in any case to suggest that the question of a guide cannot be dismissed as just a matter of a "10s. a week guide allowance." To do this is, to my mind, conniving at the worst form of sweated labour. If the Blind Home Visitor is to be able to see to it that his or her duties encompass every imaginable form of service the "guide" must be someone of an equal calibre, whose services require recognition at a rate more nearly equaling that of the "guided." Are the employing agencies, statutory or voluntary, ready to agree to this? The days are long past when a young child can be considered suitable as a guide in this work.

"S. J. F." states having noticed "*invariably*" (the italics are mine) that blind persons with whom he came into contact "*never really trusted*" sighted Home Visitors (my italics again). During the fifteen years I have been engaged in Blind Welfare work I have had ample opportunity of knowing for a certainty how universal and unbounded is the trust placed by the blind people and their families in their Home Visitors, whether they be sighted or not. That this is an incontestable fact I am convinced that abundant evidence exists, not only in the personal contacts which all of us make with the blind in our respective areas, when we hear at first hand their expressions of gratitude for what their Home Visitors do for them, but our case-files contain written proof of this. (I exclude the evidence of the Home Visitors' own reports, as this might be held to be prejudiced, though their modesty and self-effacement usually omit any direct reference to gratitude except for what

"the Council" or "the Association" has done.) I would most warmly invite "S. J. F." to accompany our Home Visitors on their rounds, as I feel sure that such an opportunity would cause him to retract what I consider to be an undeserved slur on a truly magnificent body of workers.

Yours, etc.,

EVELYN F. SALISBURY,

Organising Secretary,

The East Sussex Association for the Blind.

To the Editor.

Lessons in Braille.

SIR,—I commend to the notice of your correspondent, V. W. (Sussex), the Braille Primer, procurable from the National Institute for the Blind, price 2s. This publication with its series of graded lessons will prove to be very useful to any student desiring to grasp the rudiments of the Braille system.

Yours, etc.

H. N. VICKERSTAFF.

Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Eight-year-old Blind Boy Pianist.—Eight-year-old Jimmy Osborn, a Romford lad, blind from birth, captivated the audience at a Romford Concert in aid of the Red Cross, with his performance as a pianist. He gave a selection of tunes old and new, including one which he composed, it is stated, at the age of three!

Blind Professor of Imperial History.—Mr. C. M. MacInnes, a blind Canadian and a member of the Executive Council of the National Institute has been appointed First Professor in the new Chair of Imperial History at Bristol University. He has been Reader in Imperial History at the University since 1932.

Another Blind Choirmaster.—Mr. T. E. Reed, F.R.C.O., L.T.C., who is blind, has been appointed organist and choirmaster of St. Michael's Church, Cricklewood.

Blinded Boy Gets Cornwall Scout Certificate.—Stricken suddenly blind, and paralysed in both legs and one arm, 12-year-old Scout Ronald Clempson, of the 152nd North London Troop, has borne months of pain and uncertainty about his condition with such fortitude that the Chief

Scout has awarded him the Cornwall Scout Certificate. His serious condition failed to rob him of his cheery smile. He is under observation in hospital and his condition is now improving.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—

W. M. Stone, at Wells, following an operation. Mr. Stone took an important part in the development of the education of the blind and was for 28 years (1905-1933) Headmaster and Superintendent of the Royal Blind School, Craigmillar Park, Edinburgh, and from 1934 to 1937 Principal of the Royal Normal College for the Blind. He was Chairman of the Association of Teachers of the Blind in 1913 and 1914, Chairman of the College of Teachers of the Blind in 1933, and Secretary of the College from 1934 to 1937. He was a member of the Scottish Advisory Committee on the Blind for ten years, a member of the Departmental Committee of the Ministry of Health on the Causes and Prevention of Blindness, of the Joint Committee of the College of Teachers and the National Institute for the Blind on Research into the Education of the Blind, and of the Executive Committee of the National Library for the Blind, and Chairman of the British Braille Committee. His name was widely known in educational circles in Scotland—and later in England—and he was made a Fellow of the Educational Institute of Scotland. Under his superintendence, the Royal Blind School became the major school for the Blind in Scotland and well on the way to being the national school for the blind of Scotland.

Mr. Stone was a keen musician and developed the musical side of blind education, conducting choirs and giving many public concerts.

He played a large part in establishing the College of Teachers' examination for the home teacher's diploma, and until a few years ago he was a member of the board of examiners for the home teaching and school teaching examinations.

He had sterling qualities of sympathetic understanding and devotion to his task which endeared him to his pupils. His keen appreciation of English literature and his unfailing sense of humour were outstanding characteristics. "To him the blind were as a large family," says a former pupil, "which he treated with paternal tenderness."

The Rev. Brother John J. O'Haire, O.D.C., at St. Joseph's Asylum for the Blind, Drumcondra, who taught for many years in the school. A Braille map of Ireland which he made was one of several improvements he introduced in the education of his blind boys.

Adolf Muenz, a Jew who emigrated from Germany and was devoted to the cause of the blind. He was especially helpful in assisting

blind refugees from Germany. Despite many misfortunes—twice his factory was bombed—and illness, his thoughts were ever for the blind. Mr. Corder Catchpool, of the Society of Friends, writes: "On his birthday, his last day on earth, he whispered words that come out slowly and with great difficulty: 'I am thinking about my blind people.' He is gone from our sight—and the world is poorer for the loss of Adolf Muenz."

ECONOMIC EARNINGS—II.

By BEN PURSE

(Concluded.)

IT was Theodore Roosevelt who said "No man needs sympathy because he has to work . . . Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing." One of the greatest difficulties with which we are ever confronted in the sphere of employment is the limited choice of occupations available for the blind. The unremunerative character of these pursuits tends to dishearten and generally discourage even the most willing employee. But in a modern State many other citizens are subjected to these limitations, though perhaps they do not press quite so harshly as upon physically handicapped folk. The fact is, however, that poor remuneration has had the effect of encouraging us to rely upon the State, the local authorities or the charitably disposed to make up the differences between economic earnings and the balances required for adequate maintenance, with a consequent result that real earnings shrink just in proportion to the rise which takes place in subsidies, from whatever source they may be provided.

It is obvious that if the blind worker is to remain upon the industrial plane we must do a great deal more to develop occupations that have a real economic value to the community. It is probably true that some of the pursuits we now practise are really worth-while occupations, but unfettered competition has so reduced the level of production costs that the wage-earner is victimised by the general public who demand commodities at such ridiculously low prices.

The basket-making industry, prior to September, 1939, afforded ample evidence of this contention: it had two very adverse effects, the first of which was that goods were imported into the country and were sold at prices so low as to make it impossible for either blind or seeing workers in this country to compete, whilst on

the other hand those who made the commodities in France, Germany, Holland and Belgium were so exploited that they too could not secure anything like a decent standard of life from the industry in which they were engaged. As a result of the elimination for the time being of this insidious form of competition, in this country at least we have a prosperous industry, completely leaving out of account the high contract prices that are being paid for cane and willow goods required for war purposes.

Other pertinent illustrations can easily be given, but it is not necessary here to labour the contention that if we are to have a reasonably high standard of productivity, we have a right to expect that the public will pay appropriate prices for the supplies they need. Subsidies to blind workers are rising to an alarming level, and with few exceptions there is no evidence to show that output is keeping pace with so-called minimum wages or other agreed rates of payment. This cannot go on indefinitely, for when conditions become more normal it will not be difficult to show that from the point of view of the rate-payer it would be cheaper to withdraw the labour of the blind than to maintain it under purely artificial conditions. No one desires such an eventuality, and therefore if it is to be avoided, workshop managers and workers alike must co-operate in an endeavour to promote a new order of things where real earning capacity will make a sensible contribution to the weekly incomes of those who are occupied in the sheltered workshops.

Those workshops should be utilised for the manufacture of articles in constant demand by the public, even though this may mean a dilution of labour by the employment either of other handicapped people or of seeing artisans. No limit should be set to the production of commodities so long as such production would

result in an enlargement of the sphere of blind employment and the maintenance of prices at a sensible economic level. So far as one can see, some form of subsidy will still be required, but all the tendencies should be in the direction of reducing the liability of the rate-payers by so stimulating production that real wages will make an ever-increasing contribution towards the maintenance of a decent standard of life.

We think it is true to say that the majority of blind workers would rather earn real wages than be obliged to rely upon substantial subsidies for their weekly income, and this is evidenced by the fact that in certain workshops where a good quality of output is required for reasonable payment, real wages are rendering subsidies unnecessary, but it is regretted that such principles at the present time only have a limited application. We have already said that the institution of productivity and efficiency tests has done something to raise the general standard both in quality and quantity, but much more needs to be done in this direction, and the standards set in some workshops are too low. It must be remembered that these establishments are not intended to be pastime occupational centres, but institutions where real work has to be done and where the workshop atmosphere should at all times prevail if results are to be commensurate with the expenditure incurred.

It would be ungenerous not to recognise the fact that prior to the passing of the Blind Persons Act workshops for the blind had an exceedingly difficult task to perform. The managers realised that there was very little incentive for the worker to give of his best because prices were so low, and generally speaking, although the charitable organisations were endeavouring faithfully to discharge their obligations, the task they had to perform was beyond their resources. Real wages are certainly more substantial than they were in the early part of the century, due to a variety of causes, one or two of which only have been dealt with here. But given a broader conception of the responsibilities devolving upon the managements and a more enlightened point of view which should pervade the ranks of the workers, economic difficulties will largely be overcome and a more equitable balance between wages and subsidies will be reached.

In the last article we referred to the activities of the Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind and quoted a Press report which stated that the Borough Treasurer had given expression to certain views. Unfortunately the

report which reached us was not complete, and for the purposes of accuracy we now quote from the original text: "The Borough Treasurer of Swansea, Mr. R. A. Wetherall, reporting recently to the Blind Persons Act Committee, said that 'the Corporation was making grants to the Institution for the augmentation of earnings at the rate of £1 per week, plus £8 *per capita* per annum for administrative expenses, but the actual payments by the Institution to the employees involved an average more than twice this rate of augmentation. There was no inducement for them to earn more, because whatever they earned was augmented up to a minimum of £3 5s. od. per week. The employees in the institution showed average earnings lower than any other institution in Wales, and probably in any other part of the country. Apart from the question of the number of hours worked, the figures suggested that some at least of the employees should properly be classified as unemployable.'" It will be remembered that the average earnings were said to be 16s. 10d. per week, or considerably less than one-third of the total amount which is paid in the form of a minimum wage. The term "wage" is most misleading in this connection, since relief constitutes the major portion of the income received by the employees. There must be something wrong either with the regulation of prices which the public are being asked to pay for commodities, or something has gone astray in production costs in so far as those costs apply to the purchase of raw materials. In any circumstances the Board of Management will doubtless desire to correct these matters in order that they may put themselves right both with the local authorities and the subscribing public. We know how generously they are supported by the industrial workers of the area, and it would be unfortunate if for any reason whatever the confidence reposed in the management of the organisation should be undermined. Certainly the payment of a minimum wage of £3 5s. od. a week should evoke a more satisfactory response from every worker, whilst the management should concern itself with procuring such a quality of work from the manufacturers and the public in order that reasonable price levels may be maintained. In these days manufacturers are free to choose their orders, and the choice before the directorate of the Swansea Institution should always be such as to take only that work which will enable the cost of material to be secured, proper wage rates to be paid, and such a profit to be obtained as will provide for non-productive wages on costs or manufacturers' profit.

Previously we have given a list of institutions showing certain figures as they apply to the workers and to the general management of the undertakings. It will doubtless be of further interest to readers of THE NEW BEACON to look closely into the following facts.

Leicester Institution for the Blind.

Number of employees: Males, 55; females, 15.

Average economic earnings: Men, £1 6s. od.; women, 12s. 6d. per week.

Average augmentation: Men, £1 11s. od.; women, £1 10s. od.

Liverpool Workshops.

Number of employees: Men, 121; women, 27.

Average economic earnings: Men, £2 14s. od.; women, £1 1s. 3d. per week.

Augmentation: Men, £1 7s. 6d.; women, £1 9s. od.

Henshaw's Institution, Manchester.

Number of employees on piecework: Men, 99; women, 37.

Economic earnings: Men, £1 3s. 6d.; women, 13s. 6d. per week.

Augmentation of wages: No figures available.

Royal Midland Institution, Nottingham.

Number of employees: Men, 68; women, 12.

Economic earnings: Men, £1 10s. 8d.; women, 16s. 11d. per week.

Minimum wage: Men, £3 7s. 10d.; women, £2 18s. 7d.

Association for the General Welfare of the Blind, London.

Number of employees: Men, 81; women, 25.

Economic earnings: Men, £3 3s. 4d.; women, £1 15s. od.

Minimum wage: Men, £2 19s. od.; women, £2 1s. 6d.

Over a long period of years we have been privileged to contribute articles to THE NEW BEACON and to express views and opinions that have frequently been most unorthodox. No restraint of any kind has ever been imposed upon us by those responsible for the conduct of the journal, and it is a great thing to be able to say this in respect of a period that extends over 25 years. We hope and believe that this privilege has never been abused, and we are happy in the knowledge that the friendships made and cemented all through the years remain steadfast to the end. Correspondents have not always been in agreement with the points of view we have expressed, but without exception they have always been courteous and kind. When we remember the unsatisfactory social and industrial conditions that prevailed in other days, it is immensely gratifying to know and to

feel that substantial progress has been achieved. The difficulties of to-day and perhaps to-morrow will easily be settled so long as a spirit of goodwill and co-operation pervades all our activities, and although some of the obstacles that have still to be surmounted seem at times to be formidable, they are not comparable with the difficulties that have had to be overcome since the beginning of the present century. We profoundly believe that Browning was right in a general sense when he wrote in the Epilogue to "Asolando":

"One who never turned his back but marched
breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted,
wrong would triumph;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home.

Warrington, Widnes and District Society.—In the interests of economy the Report for 1941-2 is very brief, but it is satisfactory to see that sales have increased by nearly £1,383, and unemployment has been almost non-existent. Like other blind workshops, that belonging to the Society has been largely employed in making goods needed in the national effort. Social and Handicraft classes have been discontinued owing to present-day difficulties, but the home teachers have carried on as before.

Blind Welfare Association (Northern Ireland).—During the year the Association has extended its activities to Co. Tyrone and the city of Londonderry, and the staff of the Association has expanded to meet the new demands made upon it; there are now on the home teaching staff two supervisors, eleven home teachers, and a trained voluntary worker. It is interesting to learn that eight of the home teachers hold the certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind. That the Down Blind Persons' Committee should have invited the Association to undertake a social survey of the condition of the blind in the county, and, as a result of the survey, have raised the scale of assistance, is a tribute to the work that is being done. Regret is expressed in the Report that the Government of Northern Ireland still leaves the matter of the education

of blind children in the hands of the parents who, in a majority of cases, from a mistaken sense of kindness, decide to keep their child at home, and so still further handicap him for life.

Empire.

National Council for the Blind of Ireland.—

The friends of the National Council over here still read with unfailing interest of the steady progress made in Eire, and look forward to seeing something of the work at first hand in happier times. Although the Report for 1942-3 does not record fresh adventures, the work already in hand has been strengthened and consolidated. Here are a few items of interest from the year's chronicle:—A Conference for home teachers was held in the autumn, when 24 home teachers from Eire and Northern Ireland were present; there are 26 blind men employed on allotments under the direction of the Dublin Corporation; lessons in Braille are given by post to those out of the reach of a visiting teacher; two sales of handicrafts have been held; theatre parties and an expedition to the Zoo were arranged; over a thousand blind men and women have been supplied with wireless sets since the Fund began its work; branches in five counties are active. A special Committee has been set up to examine the administration of blind welfare throughout Eire, and a deputation is to be sent to the Minister concerned, with special reference to the immediate needs of those hit by the present high cost of living.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances:		s.	d.
19044	Box and Cox. When you know you're not forgotten, <i>Song Waltz</i>	0	6
19045	Fisher, D. Whispering Grass, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19042	Styne, J. Out of this World, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19043	Styne, J. The Lady who didn't believe in Love, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6

BRAILLE BOOKS.

History:

18090-9. The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Part V. Chapters XLV-LIV. By Edward Gibbon. Edited by J. B. Bury. 10 vols. 7s. 3d. per vol. F. 710.

Instruction Books:

19089. Complete Introduction to Braille. (In three

parts.) Part I of a new system of learning or teaching Braille; specially devised for the use of adults.

Pocket size pamphlet, interlined, special spacing, stiff covers, loose-leaf. Part I. 4d. net. E12. (Parts II and III to follow.)

Fiction:

18207-10. A Book of Escapes and Hurried Journeys, by John Buchan. The kind of stories in which the author excels, none the less exciting because they are true, and ranging from a 100 years' escape from a prison to a 4,000-mile flight by aeroplane. Eminently suitable as a reader for the adult learner of Braille. Intermediate size, interlined, intermediate character. 4 vols. 7s. per vol. F. 280.

Miscellaneous:

19021. A Manual for Telephone Operators, by D. Cleaver. Designed to simplify Braille shorthand for the use of telephone operators, and also contains the special information necessary for switchboard work. Pocket size pamphlet, interlined. 1s. E10.

World Digest.

The National Institute for the Blind can accept a limited number of subscription orders (12s. per annum post free) for the above Braille periodical.

MOON BOOKS.

4678-4680. Front Line, 1940-41. 3 vols. (Limited Edition.)
4681. Adam Bede from The World's Great Stories, re-told by W. S. Churchill. 1 vol. 1s.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENT'S LIBRARY.

	Vols.
Philosophy:	
Sidgwick, Henry. Outlines of the History of Ethics	5
Theology:	
Temple, William. Citizen and Churchman ..	1
Sociology and Politics:	
Boddington, A. S. Statistics and their Application to Commerce	4
Bryce, James. Modern Democracies	18
Cole, G. D. H. Beveridge Explained	1
Dobb, Maurice. Wages	2
Sizeranne, M. de la. The Blind Sisters of St. Paul. Trans. by L. M. Leggatt	4
Science:	
Hardy, Allison. The ABC of Geology	2
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The Cleveland and South Durham Institute for the Blind, Newport, Middlesbrough, require a female, sighted, **Home Visitor/Teacher.** Salary at the rate of £156 per annum (if certificated), with an additional War Bonus (10s. per week) and refund of travelling expenses. The area will be in North Yorkshire. Application forms, to be returned by September 7th, can be obtained from the Secretary-Superintendent of the Institute.

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Applications are invited for the post of Female Home Teacher and Visitor of the Blind. Candidates must be sighted and not over 50 years of age. The person appointed, if not holding Home Teacher's Certificate of College of Teachers of the Blind, must pass the examination within two years from date of appointment, and must have a knowledge of Braille and Moon types and the administration of the statutory provisions relating to blind persons, and also a practical ability to teach home occupations suitable for the blind. She will be required to devote her whole time to the duties and to act under direction of the Secretary of the Cardiff Institute for the Blind. Salary £160 plus £10 to £200 per annum, plus War Bonus, £26 per annum. Annual holidays 4 weeks. Forms of application may be obtained from Deputy Clerk to Blind Persons Act Committee, City Hall, Cardiff, to whom they must be returned together with copies of three recent testimonials not later than 6th September, 1943.

S. TAPPER JONES,
(Town Clerk),
City Hall, Cardiff.

12th July, 1943.

The New **BEACON**

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 321.

SEPTEMBER 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

MAPS FOR THE BLIND

By *LEONARD HARDCASTLE*

I.—About Maps in General

(i) Maps and Their Function

I THINK it would be comparatively safe to say that, apart from educational geographical atlases, more maps have been printed and published during the last four years of war than the whole twenty-five years which preceded it. Why? Is it not because military, naval, aerial, or combined operations can only be carried out after careful planning from a detailed study of the position of the object or objects to be attacked, *and their relationship to surrounding objects*? For this purpose maps and large scale models—which are really a form of large scale maps—are necessary. But apart from this, what of the general public? How are they to follow the results of the various operations of war unless maps are printed to illustrate these operations? Maps are very necessary these days!

Here, we strike at the very roots of the purposes for which maps are designed—to *show the relationship of one object, place or region to another*. There are two principal types of maps—physical and political. These may be general or local. Thus, we may have maps of whole continents or countries on the one hand, or more detailed ones of parts of continents or countries, down to local street plans of individual towns, on the other. Maps illustrating climatic regions, weather conditions, population, coalfields, industrial or agricultural areas are to be found in all good educational atlases and text books of geography. Their purpose is exactly the same in every case—to show the relationship between one region or point and another. It is true that the objects to be illustrated may be entirely different, but the purpose of the map is the same. For example, I may have a physical map of England and Wales in front of me, and turn over the page and come to a political one. The purpose of the first map is to show the relationship of the hills and valleys to one another and to each other; that of the second is to show the relationship of one county to another. It will be seen that the objects illustrated are entirely different in each case, but in both maps the objects illustrated are shown in relationship to their surrounding ones.

(ii) Some Methods by which Maps are Presented

How are these relationships shown to the public?

First, there are maps in black and white, and these may be subdivided into three groups: (1) pure linear demarcation; (2) linear demarcation with varied types of shading, i.e., parallel lines drawn

horizontally, vertically, or at an angle (say) of 45 degrees; (3) masses of black and white, in which either the land masses are shown in white and the sea in black, or vice versa. All these three types of maps are used in newspaper illustrations and small atlases of current events.

Secondly, there are coloured maps in which all the colours of the spectrum may be introduced to distinguish various features—be it political to demark different countries, physical to denote land of varying heights, climatic to denote the climatic regions of a continent or country, or industrial to show regions of varying industries and so forth.

Finally, before a map can convey information the interpretation of the different shadings or colourings must be understood, so an explanatory key must be inserted in one corner of the map. For some types of maps—climatic, for example—this is sufficient, but for most maps *names must be inserted*, otherwise it would be impossible to start from a well-known point to find an unknown one, and with children *all points are unknown ones in the first instance*.

Names can be inserted on the maps and superimposed upon the different types of shading or colouring quite easily. Then again, various styles of type and in varying sizes can be used. Names of countries can be inserted in spaced capitals to extend over its whole width; principal towns can be shown in capital letters, and their position indicated by a square dot, others in “smalls” with the initial letter only in capitals and a circular dot to show their position.

(iii) Visual Perception of Maps

We must now consider how the normal person sees and interprets a map. It is true that he sees it just as he sees anything else, but it is as well that we should study the procedure since it is entirely *debarred from the blind*. It is only by this means that we shall arrive at a true solution of the problem of maps for the blind and arrive at a conclusion which is both scientific and practical.

When a person looks at an object, rays of light pass from it which enter the eye, and on passing through the lens come to a focus on the retina, where a real inverted image is formed upon it. The impulses upon the fluids of the retina are transmitted by means of the optic nerve to the brain. It is the brain and the mind which interpret these visual impressions of an object *provided it comes within the range of the person's past experience*. Thus, a person looking at a strange object *for the first time*, observes it but does not know what it is, or its use, because it has not come to his knowledge before. Visual

perception, therefore, consists of two parts: (1) the reception of an inverted image in correct focus upon the retina, and (2) its interpretation by the brain. In short, the process of visual perception requires both visual and mental effort. A breakdown in the transmission of the rays of light from the object to the retina of the eye may be due to any disease of the eye, ranging from a simple error of refraction through any more serious disease or even total blindness. The transmission from the retina to the brain is carried by the optic nerve. Should this be defective or undeveloped, blindness will ensue once more. The inability to interpret visual impressions received upon the retina, and provided the optic nerve is in a healthy state, is due to mental deficiency, which ranges from mere “dullness” or “mental retardation” to complete lunacy. With this class of person we are not concerned at the moment, but it is worth a passing mention, since it has been recorded that some children who appeared dull at school have proved to be quite intelligent when fitted with suitable corrective glasses.

To return to visual perception. What happens when a child sees a map? If it is one drawn in black and white lines only, the lines of demarcation will produce a corresponding change in the retina, and if he does not recognise it as one he has seen before, he will soon tire of it, for mere wavy lines are not very interesting in themselves. If the map is one in which black and white masses are used, these masses will cause corresponding mass differences on the retina. Consequently, more cells of the retina are stimulated than by the mere linear map. These masses “hit the eye” so to speak, and hold one's attention for a much longer period. *They are most helpful to persons with defective vision for this very reason*. If the map is coloured, the person's attention will be held a little longer, because the colours themselves will attract his attention. Should his eyes come across the name of his home town, or the place where he spent his summer holidays, or the place where his pal Joe Smith comes from, his interest is further stimulated, and he will call others to the map and engage their attention. It is the task of the teacher to develop this interest and to enrich the experiences of his scholars so that they may be better able to appreciate still further experiences.

So far, we have considered mainly small size maps—those published in newspapers to illustrate the day to day progress of the war, and those printed in colour and sold separately, or bound together to form an atlas. There are also large size maps to be considered. One map

can be used to demonstrate a feature or series of features to a whole class or masses of people at one and the same time. The same result can be obtained by epidiascopic projection of small maps. We shall have a little more to say about

very large maps with reference to partially sighted children a little later. At the moment, it is sufficient to say that this method of teaching is *entirely debarred to the blind.*

(To be continued)

HOME NEWS

The New Pensions Act.—November 1st, 1943, is the day on which all the provisions of the Pensions and Determination of Needs Act, 1943, relating to financial assistance under the Blind Persons Acts and to outdoor relief or maintenance under the Poor Law Acts, shall come into operation.

Southern Regional Association for the Blind : Refresher Course for Home Teachers.—A most successful week's Refresher Course for Home Teachers has been held. This year the Essex County Council very kindly put the Brentwood County High School and Hostel at the disposal of the Association, with amenities, such as a swimming pool, tennis courts and spacious grounds, which were greatly appreciated by upwards of fifty Home Teachers.

The Course was planned on lines similar to last year and indeed in some cases the same lecturers repeated their talks. The Chairman of the Association opened the Course on Monday, August 30th. Perhaps the most important lecture was given by Professor A. Sorsby, the first holder of the recently founded Research Chair in Ophthalmology. Other lectures included Professional Knowledge up to date by Miss Moody-Stuart, Secretary of the Middlesex Association for the Blind, The Home Teaching Service by Mrs. Montagu Brown, member of the Ministry of Health Advisory Committee, Mental Defectives by Mr. Lumsden of the Board of Education Medical Branch. A new feature was a Round Table Conference on Homes for the Blind led by three speakers with special experience in providing Homes. These were Miss Thompson of the N.I.B., Miss Waud, Assistant Secretary of the Servers of the Blind League and Miss Hayter, whose novel departure in the provision of Homes has already been described in THE NEW BEACON. The Brains Trust again attempted to deal with a large number of questions submitted by Home Teachers during the week. Mr. Symes devoted himself to the almost superhuman task of handicraft instruction hampered by lack of materials. Some of the Home Teachers are

active in trying to solve this wartime problem, as was illustrated by the exhibits sent in for the Pastime Occupations Competition. It is hoped to enlarge upon these ideas in a later issue.

One of the greatest benefits derived from such a Course is the getting-together of the Home Teachers, not only during the daily sessions, but through community life in the Hostel. All the Home Teachers regarded this as an invaluable opportunity, which they were quick to seize upon, of exchanging ideas and experiences. Towards the end of the week, an evening party in which everyone joined to entertain themselves and each other, proved that enthusiasm had not flagged. At the finish the Home Teachers were invited to submit suggestions for future courses. The Association may well look with satisfaction upon the work of two successive years which has so greatly benefited a number of Home Teachers.

Boy Scout Makes War Maps for the Blind.—The good deed recently of Patrol Leader Bernard Carr, of Gateshead, has been inspired by his blind Scoutmaster, Mr. George Ewen. It has been to make embossed Braille maps of the war fronts to enable the blind people of Gateshead to follow the daily movements of our forces. Bernard is 16 years of age and a Patrol Leader in the 20th Gateshead (St. Paul's) Troop of Scouts. He has been mentioned in the Scouts Bulletin for his work which has given much pleasure to the blind. Interviewed by a representative of the *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*, Bernard said : " Mr. Ewen mentioned to me the difficulty of the blind in keeping up with events, and I started making the maps with the opening of the Sicily campaign as an experiment. It takes me about a quarter of an hour to make one, and I have now made six, which Mr. Ewen has taken to the Gateshead centre run in connection with the Newcastle and Gateshead Home Teaching Society for the Blind.

" I was glad to be of any possible use in the war effort, and I have been thinking of starting classes for other scouts in my troop to show them

how to make the Braille method maps. I am starting them off shortly.

"It is grand to know that they are going to be of some really good use and serve a real need."

Roman Catholic Work for the Blind.—Catholic work for the blind needs reorganising and Catholics should consider whether the time has not come to revolutionise the whole system, Canon John Bennett told the annual meeting of the only Catholic asylum and school in this country—the Catholic Blind Asylum, Brunswick Road, Liverpool, and the Catholic Blind School, West Derby. These joint homes—with their 72 adult and 61 child inmates in charge of the Sisters of Charity—are badly in need of the support which they should get but are not receiving. Catholics are inclined to send their children to local homes instead of to Liverpool, Canon Bennett pointed out, and thus the numbers are dropping off and the block grant is not being received from authorities such as Manchester.

Braille Transcribers of R. C. Books Needed.—St. Cecilia's Guild, which is under the patronage of the Dominican Provincial, wants people to learn how to write Braille, and will give them lessons. The Guild was founded by Dominican Fathers for the purpose of transcribing Catholic books into Braille, and it is fully recognised by the National Library for the Blind. It is supported by voluntary contributions. The address of the Hon. Secretary of the Guild is 4, St. Simon's Avenue, Putney, S.W.15.

The Princess and the Blind Canteen Helper.—When the Princess Royal visited the Y.M.C.A. at Pollington, near Pontefract, she spoke for some minutes with Miss Phyllis M. Falkingham, aged 25, of Balne Hall Farm, who, though blind, makes her way a mile or more from her home, generally alone, to help in the canteen.

FOREIGN NEWS

Statistics of American Libraries for the Blind.—An interesting table appears in the June issue of *The Outlook for the Blind* showing the circulation of books to blind readers by the Library of Congress, U.S.A., during 1942. Braille magazines numbered 61,900, books in Braille 301,500 (about 38 per cent. of these were in Grade 1 or 1½) and books in Moon 37,850. "Other types," rather surprisingly, were responsible for 800 volumes, and of these 664 were supplied to one Library, that at Washington. (It would be interesting to know what "other types" covered.) The Library of Congress serves 27 regional libraries for the blind in all

parts of the States, and the table shows the number of "active readers" in each area, ranging from 1,400 in New York City to 65 in Portland. The statistics also include the users of the Talking Book, who number 19,100 as against 12,900 readers of Braille and Moon—rather a startling figure, and one that is even more startling when we examine the figures for certain areas; for example, Atlanta has under 200 readers of Braille and Moon and nearly 900 users of the Talking Book, of whom 767 are "Talking books only." Out of the 27 libraries, 22 have more users of Talking books than active readers of Braille and Moon, and of 19,100 Talking Book users, nearly 80 per cent. are "Talking Books only."

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—**Franklin Smith Bailey**, the blind organist and choirmaster at Broadway Church for 17 years. He lost his sight at the age of 14 and was educated at the Royal Normal College for the Blind. He was a Lay Reader and preached many times at Broadway. He composed many hymns and chants. He had a pleasing personality and was greatly liked in the village.

The Rt. Hon. Reginald McKenna, Hon. Treasurer of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund since its inception in 1929.

Captain H. C. Armstrong, O.B.E., at Brighton, aged 51. From October, 1929, to May, 1932, he was Organising Secretary of the Greater London Fund for the Blind. In the 1914-18 War he served in Mesopotamia and after the war, on the staff of the Allied Forces of Occupation in Turkey. He wrote several books on the Middle East, including "Grey Wolf" (Mustafa Kemal of Turkey), and "Lord of Arabia" (King Ibn Saud). Another notable biographical study was his "Grey Steel" (General J. C. Smuts). He was awarded the Albert Medal for rescuing someone from drowning in a very heavy sea.

PERSONALIA

MR. A. SPENCER HOWARD, senior assistant master at the East Anglian Schools for Blind and Deaf Children, has been appointed head master and superintendent of the West of England Institution for the Blind at Exeter. Mrs. Howard is to act as matron. Mr. Howard has been on the staff of the East Anglian Schools for 11 years.

EYESIGHT AND NATIONAL HEALTH

Plan for Foundation of Ophthalmic Research Department at Oxford University

IN an editorial entitled "Saving Sight" (May 15th), we described the steps which were being taken by the National Institute for the Blind to further and support certain measures for the prevention of blindness. Amongst these was the intention of the University of Oxford to establish a Department of Ophthalmology as a development of the Oxford Medical School.

A plan for the foundation of a Department for Ophthalmic Research at Oxford University has now been published, under the title of "Eyesight and National Health," and an appeal is made for £250,000 to meet the cost.

The names of the Research Endowment Committee include the Vice-Chancellor, Sir David Ross, K.B.E., Provost of Oriel, who is acting as Chairman; Professor Ellis (Regius Professor of Medicine); Professor Liddell (Waynflete Professor of Physiology); Mr. Weaver, President of Trinity; Sir Stewart Duke Elder; Sir John Parsons; Mr. Eagar, and Mr. Tylor of the National Institute for the Blind; Miss Ida Mann (Margaret Ogilvie Reader in Ophthalmology); Sir Frank Newson-Smith; Sir John Forbes Watson; Mr. A. P. Young. Sir William Goodenough, Deputy Chairman of Barclay's Bank, is acting as Hon. Treasurer, and Mrs. de Boisse as Secretary.

The leaflet states that the University was able in 1940, through the generosity of Lord Nuffield, to appoint Miss Ida Mann as Margaret Ogilvie Reader and Honorary Senior Surgeon to the Oxford Eye Hospital, to provide a research biochemist to help her, and to build and equip a small laboratory. The time has now come for further investigation of diseases of the eye, and the University proposes to create a Department of Ophthalmology, and is appealing for funds for three interrelated purposes:—

1. Provision of laboratories, lecture rooms, library and museum in connection with the Oxford Eye Hospital which is to be rebuilt after the war.
2. Provision of salaries of research workers, teachers and technicians in the new department.
3. Provision of cost of research in the interests of blindness prevention, better treatment of eye disease and promotion of a higher standard of visual function.

The leaflet goes on to give some facts about eyesight in general, and the lines along which research is required.

Loss of sight.—It shows how the incidence of blindness has already been reduced in certain quarters, e.g., by discovery of the organisms responsible for infantile ophthalmia and by research into possibilities of operative treatment for detached retina. Much work remains to be done in connection with cataract and glaucoma.

Hereditary blindness.—Here there is a close relation between ophthalmological and genetical research.

The eyes of youth.—Further research is needed in relation to remedial exercises for children suffering from squint, and the high proportion of eye defects among twelve-year-olds requires to be investigated.

The eyes of adults.—Here again there is scope for research into the place of remedial exercises, better lighting, provision of suitable glasses. Migraine is a source of much discomfort; glasses are often worn by those who do not really need them, and there is a psychological factor deserving of attention.

Eye diseases and accidents in industry.—There is much work to be done in this field, which should go far to reduce accidents and industrial hazards.

Lighting problems.—Street lighting, already a matter of study, can be still further improved after the war; improved lighting in coal mines has reduced miners' nystagmus, and risk of accidents in factories has lessened. There is still work to do along these lines.

Eyesight in war.—Investigation into the effects of chemicals used in war and industry on the eyes is urgently required.

Eyesight in relation to general health.—The leaflet gives examples to show the close interdependence of the science and practice of general medicine with ophthalmology, and the part that the ophthalmoscope may play in detecting the onset of serious morbid conditions of brain tumours, high blood pressure and tuberculosis.

Antiseptics.—Much research has to be done to discover the safest anti-bacterial drugs for ophthalmological purposes.

Nutrition.—Finally, the new department will, it is hoped, add to the valuable work already

done in connection with nutrition by workers at Oxford, and will make its contribution through a study of the biochemical effect of malnutrition on the eyes.

The leaflet has shown that there is a vast field for research, and, to quote its own words, "one could multiply almost indefinitely the problems which await solution." "Give us the tools and we will finish the job" are words

that ring familiarly in our ears today; the "tools" for the work that it is proposed to do at Oxford will cost £250,000 "to build, equip and endow the research laboratories." The expense of the appeal is being borne by the National Institute for the Blind, and cheques are payable to the Hon. Treasurer, Ophthalmological Research Endowment Fund, Old Clarendon Building, Oxford.

SOUTHAMPTON BLIND ON NATIONAL SERVICE

Scheme operated by the Southampton Association for the Blind

By the Rev. A. R. COOPER (Secretary of the Association).

I began approximately two years ago when a registered blind man came to me desperately anxious to earn his own living instead of being the recipient of Domiciliary Assistance. He was intelligent, a bi-linguist and cultured, and he had been a telephone operator before being registered as blind. I made various unsuccessful approaches to employers; and in spite of the man-power problem, the Post Office and factories' representatives made polite excuses. However, determination won through, and finally I was able to get this man employed on a local control switchboard.

It was only a start, and in answer to the possible criticism that it was bad policy to get a job for this man at a woman's pay, I have this to say: It was much more important to me that somebody in this town should prove the value of a blind telephonist or workman. To-day the man has given such satisfaction that he is receiving an adequate salary, and although I could get him placed quite easily with another firm, it is emphatically stated by his present employers that they have no desire to lose him.

Now for my second move. One day a blind trainee came to my office, trained as a Braille shorthand typist, but without employment, and at the time with very little possibility. My Committee ultimately authorised the employment of this young lady as a Braille shorthand-typist at the Association's headquarters. Strangely enough, even this Association had not ventured to engage blind persons. She is a very great asset to us, and correspondence which has been sent out with a memo. adding "written from Braille shorthand by a blind typist," has created considerable surprise among its recipients. At first she was placed on our temporary staff; now her appointment is a permanent one with an annual increment.

The blitz on Southampton caused considerable difficulties. With all the evacuation problems arising, how could anything be done to secure work for blind people? This is a question which depends very largely upon what you want these persons to be; and when I found girls and lads trained for jobs, and sent home without any employment having been found for them, I considered it my duty to set about my task, and within a month had secured three lads full-time employment as boot and shoe repairers for the local Co-operative Society.

Having carefully perused the literature sent out by the National Institute for the Blind on the war-time employment of the blind, I got into touch with the Secretary-General, W. McG. Eagar, and before very long his representative and myself were on our way to a local aircraft factory, where we were introduced to a certain type of work which it was agreed blind persons could manipulate successfully; it was not pleasant to find after some time had elapsed that, despite promises and high encouragement, this particular firm were unable to employ any of our blind. Determined not to be beaten, I endeavoured to get work for the blind at our headquarters on the camouflaging of nets, again without success. I must admit that there was a time when I began to wish that I had never heard the term "Blind on National Service," for I literally seemed to be at a deadlock. If I am perfectly frank, there appear to be far too many people who think that it does not matter so long as blind persons are receiving Domiciliary Assistance according to the scale. The possibilities, apparently, have no interest for them until they see those possibilities actualities.

Further, quite a number of the registered blind did not wish to exchange Domiciliary Assistance for earnings, and I feel that blind

persons need some education to persuade them to get out of the rut, if and when such occasion occurs.

However, contact was made with the Ministry of Labour and National Service; it was the finest move I made. Certainly they were interested—"Could I get out a list of eligible persons?" Having presented the list required, both the Man-power and Woman-power National Service Officers came to our headquarters, and interviewed every one personally; we got a response because of the personal touch.

After considerable negotiation, persuasion and co-operation, four blind girls (one totally) started with a local firm. Reports are still excellent, and from what I gather there is every chance of permanency. "Are they happy?" Well, ask yourself. They are 23 years of age, they are on National Service, and they have never had so much income before.

A further result of our efforts was that two registered blind men were taken on trial at a dispersal-point in the town for one month, at the end of which we were informed that the work was satisfactory, but it was regretted that this particular firm could not keep them supplied with work, and could we get them transferred?

Through the splendid co-operation of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, not only these two men, but also three others were placed in an aircraft factory; the rate of pay during the training period was 1s. 2d. per hour, with possibilities for overtime and bonus, and also assisted travel over 3s. The firm kindly arranged to have these men met at the station and conveyed to the factory. One of them came to see me a few days afterwards, and I asked whether he was happy. This was his reply: "Mr. Cooper, I earn £3. 14s. 10d. per week, I can get things I have never been able to get for years. All I am praying is that I shall never have to go back to Domiciliary Assistance." This man's income as a single man was £1. 9s. per week according to the scale operative in this area. The men are still at the factory, and when the Personnel Manager came to see me one day I boldly suggested the possibilities of employing blind persons here at our own headquarters, thus obviating the difficulties of travelling; and it was a moment of exultation when he quietly replied "Yes, I see possibilities in that. We will think it over."

The possibilities foreseen that morning are today an actual fact, for not less than 22 registered blind persons are now employed on a variety of jobs at this Association's headquarters, and this number is likely to be

increased to 40. The rate of pay is 1s. 2d. per hour on a 47-hour week, and when the training period is completed and production is on the way not only will the possibility of an increase in the rate of pay be considered, but also a bonus on production in order that their earnings may be increased. I cannot speak too highly of the splendid co-operation and the great enthusiasm which has been forthcoming from members of my Committee. I am happy to state that an official of the Aircraft Factory has been in touch with the Employers' Federation, and I have been given to understand that there is hope that these blind workmen will receive the increased rate up to 1s. 6d. per hour.

Each case was investigated individually by the Association, and in all cases of married men—and in particular where the 10s. Blind Pension was surrendered and Disability Pension likewise affected—my Committee immediately authorised me to pay augmentation of wages; that will continue until such time as the rate of pay is increased and is considered a satisfactory wage.

It was on Monday, 27th June, that 18 of these men commenced their work and new life. The work being performed is as follows:—

Rivet sorting and sizing; salvaging Wellington Bomber nuts and bolts, sorting and re-tapping; wiring up parts in preparation for anti-corrosion treatment; preparation of work for electric plating and preparation for anodic treatment; deburring—removing sharp edges from machine parts, as rough edges promote fractures and cause minute cracks; sorting and sizing redundant A.G.S. and converting by means of screw cutting machines for threading bolts, to six A1 British Government specification. This is by no means the extent of the work they will perform. As one recently remarked, "Each time I come here I see fresh developments."

Here I would like to pay a tribute to the co-operation and courtesy of the firm in question, and also to the responsible officials they have sent to train these blind persons.

The previous occupations of these registered blind persons are as follows:

General labourer and stevedore, house to house collector, gardener, confectioner, estate agent's manager, instrument maker, storekeeper, lorry driver, brass-finisher, refuse collector, ships' stoker; one (blind from birth) had never followed any occupation.

With the splendid co-operation of the Emergency Feeding Centre in the town a van arrives at our centre daily with dinner

already cooked. The men receive three vegetables, meat and sweet—a real good meal for 8d. per day. Hot beverages are served at 10.30, lunch-time, and at 3.30, and everything is now running smoothly. Adequate arrangements have been made for washing, first-aid, etc., and the Secretary of the Association has been given

full authority from the firm to act as their official receiving agent.

In conclusion, I sincerely thank God for this amazing experience which has given me a wider opportunity of being of service to those less fortunate than myself than ever I had in my ministerial capacity.

TREES

SOME of us are apt to feel *de trop* in these strenuous days, especially if physically handicapped in some way. They have not called us up—yet—to don the “bifurcates” and come out into the limelight, but we still manage to do our bit behind the scenes, and in clothes somewhat behind the times. I know one blind lady over 75 who is very busy knitting her fiftieth scarf for the Navy.

There is one job we elderly blind can do well. It is urgent but it can be accomplished without money or coupons. This country of ours wants trees very badly which we can plant now to commemorate peace. Fircones are falling early this year and contain those queer flakey seeds which we can rescue after a windy night when they will be found lying some distance from the tree. If closed, the cones may be opened by placing them on a sunny shelf upon a sheet of paper. The seeds should be placed well to save pricking out. Boiling water may be poured over the well-prepared soil 24 hours before the sowing takes place to kill any weed seeds or vermin that may be present. The acorn and beechnut will soon be at our feet, now is our chance! Slips will not do since they would not produce adequate roots. Our baby trees must be given a good start in life. Since the first hour we spent in the cradle, we have been using wood, day and night, all our lives.

There is still time for us to pay this important debt we owe to mother earth.

Did you ever sit and count up the many sorts of wood that are included in the make-up of your room? That might amaze you. House and furniture, church and pew, the platform and our train—not to mention a hundred gadgets and tools, and quite ignoring the dog's kennel, pussy's basket and the inevitable mouse-trap—all depend largely upon this very wonderful thing with the brief name of wood.

Conscience asks the question: “Have you ever planted a tree?” Plenty of estates still have odd patches of rough ground which have never been used, some of which lie beside water especially in the Midlands. Some such spots are calling out for osiers. Even the very modest demesne has room for a tree or two. For the sake of our descendants let us listen to conscience by not forgetting the ash, birch and bat-willow, for it is to be hoped that sports will one day take the place of fighting.

What a difference there would be in the Midlands if the Italian prisoners of war were set to clean up our waterways, and thus avert the annual floods which cause so much anxiety and loss and incidentally improve those odd remnants of idle land!

A. T.

“SO MANY BITS AND PIECES”

By BEN PURSE

THE above quotation is not one which the writer has suggested of his own volition: the sentence was used recently by a friend who desired scornfully to express disapproval of the present blind welfare services. He went on: “They are something like an ill-conceived patchwork quilt—in fact, nothing better than a huge ragbag.” Needless to say, we could not possibly be in sympathy with such strictures, for however unsatisfactory our present arrangements are, it is positively unjust to describe them in such objectionable phraseology. The late Woodrow Wilson once wrote: “One

cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty councils. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat. If there is any heat at all, there ought to be that warmth of the heart which makes every man thrust aside his own personal feeling, his own personal interest, and take thought for the welfare and benefit of others.”

We know that there are many cynics abroad who pretend to despise this ethical conception of duty, but the world would be a sorry place indeed if we failed to treasure all humanitarian impulses.

It must be remembered that blind welfare

services have not been developed as it were overnight. The voluntary agencies, however imperfectly, have been striving for many decades to bring a measure of well-being and general happiness into the lives of people who until comparatively recently were no concern either of the State or of the municipalities. All experimental and research work has hitherto been performed by these agencies, and so far at least, neither the State nor the local authorities has shown any degree of originality in the treatment of complex social problems. Gradually an edifice has been constructed from material that was not always the most suitable for the building, and yet who can say with knowledge and experience, that the effort has not been worth while?

Some of us may feel, like Omar Khayyam, when he exclaimed in the Rubiyat :

“ Ah, love, could thou and I with Fate conspire
To change the sorry scheme of things entire,
Would we not shatter it to bits, and then
Remould it nearer to the hearts' desire! ”

Yes, indeed, most of us in our youthful enthusiasms have believed ourselves to be capable of doing all this and more, but had we been left to our own devices, what a sorry mess we would have made of it all!

Our candid friend could have achieved all this and a great deal more perhaps, but it is not vouchsafed to most of us mortals to begin *de novo*, for we are only an insignificant part of the mechanism of things and could hardly be trusted to originate and develop huge and complex systems that are intended to determine the lives of millions, who are not less capable than ourselves.

The system of blind welfare services as we know it to-day is not the creation of any one mind. Slowly and with infinite painstaking we have evolved arrangements that are designed to supply admitted deficiencies in our social system, and those arrangements will be brought nearer to perfection just in proportion to the interests, sympathy and resources that time and circumstance make available. We have a right to criticise, but that criticism should always be tempered by the knowledge and experience we may have of the situation we set out to censure. Disraeli wrote : “ It is much easier to be critical than to be correct.” Surely, however, the best-informed criticism is that which seeks to be correct, whilst at the same time it should be so designed as to be practical and constructive.

We can say with some degree of confidence that many of our present-day critics are quite

incompetent to express a fully-informed judgment in respect of blind welfare services. They know nothing of the historical basis upon which the system rests, and appear to be quite incapable of appreciating the fact that they are not dealing with a brand-new order of things that has been imposed upon us by some mythical superman. The truth is that all our social services are a growth of long periods of experiment and partial research, and perhaps have some of the defects which are incidental to such arrangements ; but might it not also be true that they possess many of the virtues that characterise developments of this kind, and contain those elements of purposefulness and stability without which no ordered state of society is possible? Richter said : “ Criticism often takes from the tree caterpillars and blossoms together.” An indiscriminating critical attitude is never helpful and usually cannot be regarded as in any sense indicative of the symptoms of progress ; because it is ill-informed it is ineffective : therefore, our candid friend would be well advised to find some more reliable premises from which to launch his invective. Locke most admirably put the position as we are now considering it in the following terms : “ He that judges without informing himself to the utmost that he is capable, cannot acquit himself of judging amiss.”

Is it to be held to be of no consequence that blind welfare services in this country have been so fashioned as to enable us to say with absolute certainty that there is reasonable provision for every sightless member of the community? Proper care is exercised in early infancy in respect of most blind children. Occasionally something may go wrong which indicates a weakness in these arrangements, but for the most part an immediate effort is made to rectify the error, and logically therefore to justify the system of care that is available. At the appropriate time education is provided for every blind child who is capable of profiting thereby, and although much remains to be done in this sphere of activity before we can claim to be satisfied, yet the basis has been well and truly laid in that the State makes it compulsory for education so to be provided. In the coming days we will fashion that education in a more appropriate way so as to enable the future citizen to be more capable of entering into the full life of the community ; but the thing that really matters is, not that deficiencies here and there have to be made good, but that the structure in the main is sound and capable of such elasticity as to be adaptable to the exigencies of any given situation.

The critic is sometimes disposed to question

the advisability of providing higher education for the blind because he happens to know of some young man or woman who appears to have failed to make good in the particular field of endeavour for which it was thought that appropriate training had been provided. Such critics do not apparently appreciate the fact that an isolated instance does not prove a general principle. A little research would lead him to the discovery that hundreds of blind men and women are succeeding in those spheres of employment where he had assumed that failure was inevitable. It is true that round pegs are sometimes fitted into square holes, and our best devised schemes do not always produce the results we are seeking; but the failures, when contrasted with the number of successes, are infinitesimal. Nevertheless, we must always be sufficiently alert when the selection of candidates is our prime responsibility, and bring all our mature judgment and experience to bear on every such situation. It is a very elementary fact, and one of which most of us are conscious, that in the matter of selection of occupations and the choice of candidates we have a most important duty to discharge, for we are dealing, it must be remembered, with human beings and not with so many commodities.

Though the task of providing employment for the blind is a service which the local authorities are required to perform, or to make satisfactory arrangements for its fulfilment, it is quite obvious that very little would have been achieved had the voluntary agencies not given their whole-hearted co-operation. Perhaps we ought to say *many* of the voluntary agencies, because we fear, like the local authorities, some of them have not realised the full responsibility which circumstances and not statutory requirements have committed to their care. The fact is that we are only beginning to realise how very important it is to substitute employment for promiscuous charity; but sufficient has been achieved to demonstrate beyond all doubt that by far the most important task before us is to find worthwhile economic employment and so to develop existing facilities as to enable the competent authorities unreservedly to believe and affirm the view that no blind person in the community who is capable of engaging in a useful occupation shall lack the opportunity of being so employed. We are nearer the verification of the statement to-day than at any other period in our history, and we must be very mindful in the post-war years not to relapse into the old system of *laissez-faire*, for so to do would be to encounter a tragedy of the first magnitude.

Does the present position then, as it affects the organisation of the labour of the blind, warrant us in believing that this is an arrangement of "so many bits and pieces"? Surely not. It has meant much negotiation and painstaking effort to reach the position that now obtains, and the so-called critic does a great disservice to the cause by glibly pretending to be able to pass judgment on schemes that he has not even commenced to understand. You cannot select just one feature of a system that may seem to be unsatisfactory, and declare in consequence that everything in the general arrangements is bad. Any virtue that may be associated with general criticism is vitiated by taking such a superficial view of the situation. If the critic is to be respected and his opinions valued, he must surely show not only that he possesses sound and discriminating judgment, but that such judgment is fortified both by knowledge and experience. Pope in his "Essay on Criticism" has put the matter admirably:

"In every work regard the writer's end,
Since none can compass more than they intend;
And if the means be just, the conduct true,
Applause, in spite of trivial faults, is due."

The writer is old enough to remember most vividly the social and industrial conditions prevailing in the first few years of the present century, when at least three-fourths of the blind community was directly chargeable to the Poor Law system, when more than 5,000 sightless folk were incarcerated within the walls of Poor Law institutions, and when an equally large number eked out a subsistence somehow upon the paltry doles paid in the form of outdoor relief. Our candid friend ought to know that such conditions have gone for ever, and although there are vast variations in the scales of assistance that are now provided for dependent blind folk, the abject state of poverty with all its attendant evils has been banished from our social system. This surely has been worth striving for and merits more sympathetic treatment than is accorded to it by some of those who believe in absolute State management and control. No, our system is not one of "so many bits and pieces," neither is it "a patchwork quilt," nor yet a "ragbag." It represents a substantial degree of progressive development; the arrangements under it are by no means perfect, but given goodwill and co-operation by the State, the local authorities and the voluntary agencies, this admirable threefold partnership will persist long after the tongue of the critic is silenced "and his mouth is filled with dust."

THE ONE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE

EXPOSURE to open air and sunlight is often the best remedy for morbid conditions and, as partial and therefore misleading publicity has been given in certain Regional Meetings to the National Institute's decision to reconstitute itself under Royal Charter, a brief statement of facts may be conducive to the health of Blind Welfare.

Much has been done of recent years to overcome the tendency in Blind Welfare which a well-known social worker some fifteen years ago described as its "incredible quarrelsomeness." It would be a tragedy to revive that reputation now, particularly on a matter which sets the seal on a long policy of conciliation for which the National Institute, whatever force there may have been in former criticisms, is entitled to proper credit. Competition in collections—once a sore point—has been eliminated over the greater part of the country by the policy of unification approved in every detail by the Ministry of Health. The fears of domination or absorption which once prevailed, have been met on the most generous lines by successive stages of reconstitution by which the Institute has become in effect a partnership between every interest in Blind Welfare. The present step is designed to complete the process of co-ordination and to implement in the most honourable way the agreement made between the N.I.B. as formerly constituted and the national associations of Local Authorities. There is nothing in it to revive old fears or dead hostilities.

The facts which should be known, as a corrective to present misapprehensions, are that the National Institute, when it accepted the Joint Blind Welfare Committee's Scheme, appointed a Committee of the Council to advise on the best way of putting the Agreement into permanent legal form. That Committee reported in March, 1938, to the newly constituted Council that, as the new constitution involved so many changes in the existing Articles of Association under the Companies Act, the Solicitors advised Incorporation under Royal Charter as the most appropriate legal form for a body with the Institute's functions. The reconstituted Council thereupon unanimously authorised its General Purposes Committee to seek such incorporation, subject, of course, to the form of the Petition being approved before presentation. In March, 1939, the Council, having received a report from the General Purposes Committee appointed a Sub-Committee, qualified to deal with the legal processes involved, to consider the business; and it empowered it to proceed. The Sub-Committee acted according to its instructions. The outbreak of war inevitably caused delay; but the documents were in due course drawn up after the necessary consultations with Counsel, and the Sub-Committee proposed that, although the Privy Council might well be unable to receive Petitions for Royal Charter during the progress of hostilities, the documents prepared by the Lawyers—at considerable expense—should be completed so that they should be ready so soon as the Privy Council was willing to receive them.

It was at this point that opposition from the Regional quarter began to develop. Criticism of the phraseology of the documents was legitimate and useful. It improved the wording at a number of points and, notably, it led to the taking of Opinions from other Counsel, as a result of which it was found possible (though the Counsel first employed told the Charter Sub-Committee that it was not possible) to embody the Council's actual scheme of constitution in the Bye-Laws. The Charter Sub-Committee met the criticisms fairly at every point, even when they seemed to be based on the supposition that some elements in the Council were secretly minded to take the first opportunity of weakening the position of the Regions, a supposition for which there was not an atom of foundation. There was unfortunate evidence, however, of a desire not to improve the documents, but to obstruct or prevent the Petition going forward. That was openly avowed in recommendations made by the Executive of the Northern Counties Association to its General Council, the members of which, naturally enough, knew nothing more of the business than they were told. Reasons for the obstruction were given as "fundamental principles," of which the least that can be said is that they were not principles; they were not fundamental; and taken all together they constituted no explanation of the opposition offered. At the same time a Joint Committee of Regions was formed which employed a Solicitor and Counsel to advise it on the N.I.B. Charter.

The Institute's Charter Sub-Committee showed exemplary patience. It met the representatives of the Regions and conceded every point except two which, in their view, were inadvisable and inconsistent with the agreement made between the National Institute and the Joint Blind Welfare Committee (and which the Regions, incidentally, themselves accepted in accepting representation on

the reconstituted Council). These they left for the decision of the Council itself, and the threat now made by certain elements to wash the Institute's perfectly clean linen in public results merely from the fact that they did not obtain a majority on these points. Any such action would be contrary to the interests of Blind Welfare, and opposed to any true conception of democratic government.

It is understood that the Southern Region, at any rate, have laid their representatives on the Institute's Council under an obligation to vote on Regional matters as decided by the Region or the Joint Committee of Regions whenever "Regional interests are involved." The principle of *representation* is democratic; the principle of *delegation*, by which persons appointed by a constituent body lose freedom of action as members of that body, belongs to political systems quite distinct from democracy. It might be healthy to have that point more fully discussed. The point we would make here is that the organisation of Regional interests as a separate bloc on the Institute's Council is contrary to the Scheme of co-ordination. The purpose of co-ordination as enunciated by the Joint Blind Welfare Committee was to reduce the number of bodies claiming to be national, not to bring another national body into being. Regions in co-ordination are links between the executive Local Authorities and Societies and the National Body; they cannot be bodies with distinctive policies of their own, and there is nothing in the functions as ascribed to them in Schedule D of the revised Co-ordination Scheme to confer on them distinctive interests. The National Institute is a body of dignity and standing in the eyes of the public. The maintenance of its prestige is a matter which concerns the blind in Great Britain and the Empire. It is governed by persons who are chosen to direct national policy for the blind on their own judgment of the issues placed before them as members of the Council. The Institute's work has benefited by the participation in it of able men and women of varied experience and diverse points of view. The honour of a Royal Charter would be one conferred on the whole blind world and would reflect lustre on all members of the Institute's Council and on all agencies working in conjunction with it. The only fundamental principle of blind welfare is, that everyone concerned with it should work in effective harmony for the good of the blind and for no other purpose. We have no desire to criticise the Regions, or any members of their Executive Committees who contemplate a step which, whether it had any effect or not, would inevitably seem to have a merely damaging intention, and would be as unworthy of them as of the cause we all have at heart, but they should be reminded that "playing at politics" would discredit Blind Welfare and damage the cause of the blind.

THE EDITOR

BLIND PRISONERS OF WAR

From "Le Messager Suisse des Aveugles," June, 1943

PICTURE a large hospital, with 600-700 prisoners of war, seriously wounded men, those who have had limbs amputated, the tubercular, and those suffering from contagious diseases. In one small section apart there are twenty-five men, all British. They are the war-blinded, who have been at ——— since 1941, and their blindness is, for the most part, total.

Soon after they were taken prisoners they were sent with the other wounded to a military hospital, and remained there for long months, alone, cut off from the world, behind barbed wire, and behind closed eyes. The General Committee of Christian Youth felt for them and asked its representatives at Berlin to take whatever action it could to help them. The military authorities discussed repatriation. Hope was stirred; those who had suffered serious eye injuries were to return home. Then came cruel disillusionment; the exchange could not be carried out, and it became essential, at all costs, to make some new plan. Understanding, sympathy and goodwill were manifested, and, some months later, the blinded men, still prisoners of war, were collected in the hospital

where they are to-day and could begin to re-adjust their lives. Three stages of Braille study; typing and shorthand for those who are suitable intellectually for it; music, massage and workshop training for others. All this instruction is given under the direction of special English and German instructors. The Christian Unions have provided several accordions, violins, guitars and oboes, and even a piano; then a punch-ball, gymnastic apparatus, rope for jumping, climbing and tug-of-war, a rowing-machine, as well as indoor games, special playing cards and chess sets for the blind.

Those who have been almost three years as prisoners have learned all they can; what is the next step for them? If they cannot be repatriated in the near future, they will suffer accordingly, from the point of view of morale. Now that they have been rehabilitated they should return to the environment in which they were before the war and in which they must live—though now as blind men—for the rest of their lives. Let us hope that this time their expectations will not be disappointed.

THE ELDERLY BLIND: WHAT CAN THEY DO?

By A. E. BAWTREE, F.R.P.S.

5. In the Laboratory

THE previous articles have described activities which any ordinary person could undertake, but this series would not be complete without reference to a line in which I have specialised, though others might not be able to do likewise. Broadcast talks about how intricate devices are made and elaborate processes are carried out do not lose in their interest because the ordinary listener could not achieve the same results.

For the last three years that I had my sight I was engaged in the manufacture of the little coloured beads which are put into wireless batteries to show the state of charge. Later, though without sight, I have been able to carry on the work with equal success.

To begin with, the ingredients are very accurately weighed; I feel below the balance beam and can tell when it is just central. They are heated together in a saucepan till I judge them hot enough—by sound, from effervescence which begins, and by the smell of a certain vapour which then begins to boil off. The mixture is allowed to cool till a spoon begins to stick to the side of the pan, when the mixture will not be hot enough to burn the fingers if spilled upon them.

The composition is poured into tall, upright brass tubes, and how the tube is filling up can be judged by the sound made by blowing across its top. The note gets higher and higher till, when the liquid is half an inch down, it ceases altogether. When the composition has cooled, the stick is taken from the tube and warmed in an electric oven. It is cut into lengths with a wire, as a provision merchant cuts cheese. A length is put into an electrically heated syringe and squirted out in a round rod like a warm soft worm. This is laid between a pair of grooved rollers, when a turn of the handle cuts it into beads. Of the smallest size, fifty are formed at one cut, a matter of importance since they are required by the million.

To pick out good beads from malformed ones, they are poured on to a sloping piece of glass, with a gap at the bottom between it and a box. The good beads come down so fast that they jump the gap and fall into the box, while the bad ones fall short and are melted down again.

A quart of beads, which, in the small size, means 30,000, are put into a copper pot. Some

colouring matter and varnish are added, the lid is closed and the pot is violently shaken by means of an electric motor for 20 minutes. The beads come out brightly coloured and highly polished.

They must be very accurately adjusted for specific gravity; that is, for weight compared with water. Specific gravity of anything is the weight of a cubic foot in ounces; of water it is 1,000. Now beads of nominally 1,175 gravity must not be lighter than 1,172 or heavier than 1,178.

A teacupful of the beads is poured into a perforated celluloid box, standing in a tank of acid of gravity 1,172. All the beads which float are too light, and are put aside for further treatment. Those which sink are put into a similar box in a tank of acid of gravity 1,178. All that again sink are rejected and melted down as being too heavy. Those which float are right, and are washed, drained and spread on blotting paper to dry.

The beads are counted by pouring them into a tray with a loose bottom, filled with little pits, each capable of holding one bead. The bottom of the tray is pulled out and all loose beads are tilted off it. The number, accurately counted, are tipped into a box and thence poured into envelopes. The counter for the smallest size counts 750 beads in a few seconds.

To get the acids to the exact gravities, I have a set of little coloured glass balloons of the required gravities, made by a precision firm. I put the 1,172 balloon into the tank of acid and add either water or strong acid drop by drop till, feeling with a glass rod; I find the balloon just floats. This gives an error slightly in favour of the customer, and some beads which were really just right may be rejected. In the other acid the 1,178 balloon must just sink, so again giving the error in favour of the customer. My tests of the beads are repeated by the purchaser and, though I have made them entirely without sight, the results show practical perfection.

In my laboratory I make up solutions, even medicines, with the same accuracy as does the chemist. This is how I measure water or other fluids. I have a pint glass measure with the ounces shown in embossed numbers on the outside, and every half ounce marked by a line. Suppose I want to measure $12\frac{1}{2}$ ounces of water. I hold a glass tube with its bottom end against

the particular mark on the outside of the measure and slip a small rubber ring down the tube till it touches the rim of the measure. Now I place the tube inside, again with the rubber ring touching the rim. I pour in water till, with a very gentle suck, I feel that the end of the tube is closed by the water. By keeping the suck gentle I have never drawn water, acid, paraffin or any other liquid right up into my mouth.

I make the whole of the family's requirements in the way of tapers and candles. Balls of cotton wick can be bought. I twist together a double length of wick, draw this through a saucepan of melted paraffin wax, and hang it up to cool. Each piece is 2 feet long and cuts up into three 8-inch tapers.

For candles I have a thick brass tube, with a lead plug in the bottom. This is hollowed out to give the shape of the candle top, and has a

small hole right through it. The end of a spool of wick is passed upwards through this plug and out at the top of the mould. It passes through a little cross bridge of strip brass and is tied in a knot. The wick is then pulled taut from below and the mould is filled with melted wax. When cool, the knot is cut off one end of the mould and the spool of wick from the other, when the candle can be pulled out. The bottom will have sunk into a hollow, and about an inch must be cut off to give the candle a finished appearance.

A leaden plug was spoken of as closing the end of the mould. I do all my own lead casting and solder mixing. I have made a clamp which holds the ladle firmly over the gas ring, and I tell when the metal is properly melted by stirring with an old iron spoon.

(To be concluded)

A BLIND VICTORIAN POET

TO-DAY the praise lavished by his contemporaries upon Philip Marston, the blind Victorian poet, seems exaggerated, though a writer who won the admiration of such masters as Swinburne, Rossetti and Browning must have had poetic gifts lifting him above his fellows. Perhaps he wrote too much, too easily and too gloomily, so that the reader becomes satiated with verse that breathes frustration and despair. At the same time, anyone who knows the circumstances of his life can hardly be surprised at the pessimism that runs through his verse, and anyone who perseveres will find here and there among the poems lines and stanzas of such beauty as to justify high praise.

Philip Marston was born in London in 1850. His father was a well-known Victorian dramatist and literary critic, the friend of Dickens, Thackeray and other leading writers of the time; and his house near Chalk Farm was a favourite rallying ground of men of letters. Philip was the third child and only son, and his birth greatly rejoiced his parents and two small sisters. He was soon known in the nursery as Philip the King, from the title of verses addressed to him by Philip James Bailey (author of *Festus*), who, with Mrs. Craik (remembered to-day as writer of *John Halifax, Gentleman*), stood sponsor at his christening.

When he was three years old his sight was seriously impaired after scarlet fever, and although he did not become totally blind until early manhood, he was never able to read print.

His education was gladly undertaken by his mother, who never tired of reading aloud to her little son. Almost from babyhood he "lispd in numbers," and by the time he was fifteen he had written verse which was later embodied in his published work. The happy home in which he grew up compensated for much, and its background of culture was in itself an education. Until he was about twenty he had enough sight "to see tree boughs waving, the pageant of sunset and the glimmer of the fire on the hearth," so that he always retained lively visual memories, and his poetry when it dealt with things seen need not be criticised as guilty of verbalism.

The first of the many heavy blows of fate which life held for him fell when he was preparing his first volume of verse for the printer; for at that time he lost the last remnants of his failing sight and almost at the same time the mother who had been his closest companion and friend. The poems he intended to dedicate to her were now dedicated to her memory.

The shock of her death was softened by his meeting about this time with Mary Nesbit, a gifted and charming girl, and the two fell deeply in love with one another almost at sight. When the verses (*Song Tide*) were published in 1871, the first part of the volume consisted of sonnets addressed to her. The book was cordially received by the critics, and the clouds which had hung over its writer seemed to have lifted. But his happiness was short-lived, for Mary Nesbit died only a few months after their engagement, and once again Philip Marston was a lonely man.

It was then that he turned for consolation and companionship to his unmarried sister Cicely, and found in her the same capacity for devoted comradeship that he had earlier found in his mother. The house in Regent's Park was given up, and brother and sister spent much time in travel in France and Italy.

"If my life could take

Colour from thy life I might learn to live"

are two lines from one of Marston's poems dedicated to Cicely which show his close dependence upon her.

About a year after Mary Nesbit died, Marston came to know Oliver Madox Brown, son of Ford Madox Brown, the artist, and himself a painter and writer of promise; the two young men became close friends, seeing each other almost daily for two years, and exchanging letters whenever they could not meet. But once again Marston's friendship was doomed, for in 1874 Oliver died with tragic suddenness. In the shadow of his new bereavement, the poet published his second book of verse, *All in All*.

Four years passed, and Cicely died, after a day's illness, when Philip and his father were travelling in France. This in the view of one of Philip's closest friends, Mrs. Chandler Moulton (an American writer of verse), was perhaps the hardest blow he ever had to bear; in every other sorrow Cicely had been at his side to comfort him, but this new loss he bore almost alone. Only a few months elapsed before his other sister Eleanor also died.

From early manhood Marston had been a devoted admirer of Rossetti's verse, and he tended to model himself upon the poet-painter too closely. "For all its sweetness," wrote Coulson Kernahan in a criticism of Marston's poems, "Marston's verse seems thin and shrill after Rossetti's, and the framework of his poetry strikes one as lacking in intellectual robustness. He is diffuse and often painfully unequal . . . he had that fatal facility for verse-making which often led to the publication of much that was mediocre and immature. Melody is his one unfailing characteristic, and musical his lines always are . . . but his range of music was narrow and his bass notes were few."

In 1882 the death of Rossetti was followed closely by that of James Thomson, another of Marston's friends, and it was said that the effect of these frequent losses was to make him morbidly nervous of making new friends, for fear of bringing ill-fortune to those he loved. In 1883 his third volume of verse was published, under the title of *Wind Voices*, and about this time his own health began to fail, though he lived for four more years, dying, at the age of 36,

in February, 1887. Swinburne, whom he had known and loved since boyhood, paid tribute to him after his death in a sonnet beginning:—

The days of a man are threescore years and ten,
The days of his life were half a man's whom we
Lament, and would yet not bid him back, to be
Partaker of all the woes and ways of man."

Short stories, which Marston had written as "pot-boilers" (to use his own description of them), were collected after his death by William Sharp and published under the title of *For a Song's Sake*. Though he also wrote essays and critical articles, the best of his work was comprised in some of his many sonnets and in a lyric, *The Rose and the Wind*, which, with his *Old Churchyard at Bonchurch*, finds a place in the "Oxford Book of Victorian Verse." Here is one of the finest of the sonnets:—

The breadth and beauty of the spacious night,
Brimmed with white moonlight, swept by
winds that blew

The flying sea-spray up to where we two
Sat all alone, made one in Love's delight—
The sanctity of sunsets palely bright;
Autumnal woods seen 'neath meek skies of
blue;

Old cities that God's silent peace stole
through—

These of our love were very sound and sight.
The strain of labour; the bewildering din
Of thundering wheels; the bell's discordant
chime,

The sacredness of art; the spell of rhyme—
These, too, with our dear love were woven,
That so, when parted, all things might recall
The sacred love that had its part in all.

WHERE SHALL I FIND HIM ?

By J. D. JOYCE

(*Molyneux Institution for the Blind, Dublin*)

IF I should stray through forest dim and deep,
Where Nature works her wonders unmolested,
And where through summer heat and winter sleep
Calm beauty reigns by mortals unsuggested.
He would be there.

If I should climb the lonely mountain height,
And on its silent summit pause and ponder
Upon the glorious view that meets the sight,
The haunts of men, the peaceful homesteads yonder.
He would be there.

If I should sail across the boundless sea,
Tost by the restless waves' perpetual motion,
Away from land my swift barque bearing me,
I still should feel His Presence on the ocean.
He would be there.

If I should mingle with the city throng,
The High, the Proud, the Humble and the Lowly,
Where joy and pain are blended in their song,
E'en there would be His gentle Spirit holy,
Being everywhere.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

A Century of Service to the Blind.

Under this title the Royal Midland Institution for the Blind has published an extremely interesting brochure, whose compilation does credit to the present Superintendent and Secretary, Mr. A. C. V. Thomas.

Like so many good things in our country's social history, the Institution owed its origin to the benevolence of members of the Society of Friends, who founded the Nottingham Society for Teaching the Blind to Read the Holy Scriptures just a hundred years ago. A delightful portrait of Miss Mary Chambers, co-foundress with her seeing Quaker friend, Miss Lucy Woods, appears on an early page; the extreme frivolity of Miss Mary Chambers's lace and beribboned cap suggests that she was not herself a Quaker. Within a year of the foundation of the Society, there were 14 blind pupils receiving instruction in Lucas type, spelling, music, arithmetic and net-making, and within ten years events had so moved that land was bought and "a magnificent structure in the Elizabethan style of architecture erected" for the accommodation of forty boarders. It was so designed that it could be enlarged as circumstances required, without doing violence to the original plan.

To-day, 2,260 blind persons in the city and county of Nottingham and in Derbyshire are cared for, 85 persons are employed in the workshops, there are 80 registered home workers, the blind are visited in their homes by 14 certificated home teachers, and sales have reached a figure not far short of £53,000.

We have said something of 1843 and of 1943, but little of the intervening years; and those who would like to trace the gradual growth of an Institution which is to-day one of the best-known in the country should read Mr. Thomas's excellent history for themselves.

A Blind Man on the Coventry Air Raids.

The story of the German air-raids on Coventry on November 14th, 1940, and April 8th and 10th, 1941, has been told in the booklet "Battle of the Spires," by Ernest Hobbs (British Publishing Company, Ltd., Gloucester, price 2s. 6d.). The booklet is dedicated to the staff of the Coventry and Warwickshire Hospital, where Mr. Hobbs was a patient in the early days of the war, and

he pays a fine tribute in its pages to the workers, paid and unpaid, with whom he came into contact there. "They never seemed to think of themselves at all, but only of their task, affording relief and succour to their suffering charges."

The writer in his introduction gives an interesting personal note; he was for some years in the Army and (from a later reference to "those of us who had experienced the noises of battle before in the last war") was evidently a combatant in 1914-18. By trade he was, before he lost his sight, a miner, and the booklet was written to help the building fund of the new Coventry Hospital.

The story of the raids is simply written and with the directness which belongs to first-hand narrative. The most interesting section to readers of THE NEW BEACON is that entitled "A Blind Man's Reactions." Mr. Hobbs is evidently a man of acute hearing, and he writes picturesquely of the sounds of a raid. To him the high-pitched note of an alert seemed like a cry of pain and terror, but that of lower pitch a defiant angry voice; in the fading tones of an alert, whether high or low in pitch, there seemed to be "the same final sentiment of resignation to the inevitable." The approaching enemy planes seemed to say "You-u, you-u, you-u" and "as they dive and drop their death-dealing missiles they say, 'Hah. ha-ha'; then, as they accelerate to get away, their engines seem to be playing an exultant tattoo."

From personal experience he gives one or two hints to those who may be called upon to face the ordeal of Coventry; experience has shown that taking shelter under the stairs has saved life, and the Anderson shelter should be kept clear of bricks and mortar. Fields and the open country are the safest of all, but "the place for able-bodied adults is just where they can be of use. . . . In air-raids we should be looking out for incendiary bombs and deal with them at once." Thousands of incendiaries were dropped on Coventry, and the writer tells how on one place just over a hundred fell, "literally in a heap in a garden."

"The Battle of the Spires" is illustrated with excellent photographs, including a hitherto unpublished panoramic view of Broadgate taken a few days after the eleven-hour raid of November.

The Pimpernel.

Perhaps the highest compliment one can pay "The Pimpernel," which is the "official organ of the Union of Worcester College for the Blind," is that it might have emanated from any public school; its complete normality shows that the Worcester College boy is capable of getting out of public school life all that it has to give—mentally, morally and physically—and that he will grow up into the completely normal citizen, handicapped, no doubt, by defective sight, but not allowing that handicap to warp his life or prevent him from taking his full share in life's interests, responsibilities and fun.

The Editor is right when he says that the majority of the contributions are "of a heavy nature," and a little more frivolity would have been acceptable; however, the poet who says "I am weary of this thing called life" probably does not intend us to take him too literally. Peter Kelly writes pleasantly on the origin of the will o' the wisp, and there is a lively account of the harvest camp which was an experiment of last summer, to be repeated this year. News of Worcester Old Boys shows a fine range of activity, and one would have welcomed more of it.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Saving Sight.

SIR,—We have read with great interest your editorial, "Saving Sight," in THE NEW BEACON for May 15th, and are particularly appreciative of the fact that activities for prevention of blindness are progressing under auspices of the National Institute for the Blind and of the other agencies mentioned. We can realize the difficulties under which the programme has been kept alive, and our warmest wishes go to all concerned. We shall watch developments with interest, and wish to co-operate in any way that we can.

Yours, etc.,

(MRS.) ELEANOR BROWN MERRILL,

Executive Director,

National Society for the Prevention of Blindness,
New York, U.S. A.

To the Editor.

Reconstruction of Blind Education.

SIR,—Mr. Eagar modestly suggests a Central Body for the Education of the Blind.

Why form a new organisation when the

National Institute for the Blind already is responsible for Secondary Education and for Nursery Schools?

The simple solution would be for the N.I.B. to co-ordinate Primary and Technical Schools.

Yours, etc.,

West Rasen Rectory,

F. H. ROACH.

Market Rasen, Lincs.

[Mr. Eagar replies: "Mr. Roach's suggestion would be objected to in some quarters, and, in my opinion, rightly. A Central Body for the Education of the Blind and similar bodies for the education of other handicapped children should be detached wings, as it were, of the Board of Education, of no great size and designed expressly for the task in hand."]

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blind Prehistorian at Work on New Book.—

Although he is blind and nearly 80, Sir Arthur Smith Woodward, the prehistorian who, in 1912 discovered parts of the Piltdown skull at the place in Sussex after which it is named, is engaged in writing a book to explain what the Piltdown man was like. Lady Smith Woodward acts as her husband's secretary, taking down Sir Arthur's dictation in longhand, looking up references, etc.

"I really began this book," Sir Arthur told a *Star* reporter, "so that people visiting Piltdown Common, where Mr. Charles Dawson and I discovered the skull, might be able to understand something of the everyday life of this prehistoric man, the kind of food he ate, the tools and weapons he used, where he slept and what kind of animals he came into contact with and fought in the strange land that has now become part of the quiet Sussex countryside."

Chorleywood College Successes.—The following examination successes are announced from Chorleywood College:

Oxford Local Higher Certificate.—Muriel Easter.

School Certificate.—Mary Agar, Patricia Hart, Sheila Jennens, Betty Jervis, Evelyn John, Marcheta Matthews.

Blind Tenor at York Minster.—Mr. George Palmer, the blind tenor, was the only member of the Choir of York Minster to contribute to the special musical Holidays-at-Home programme of orchestral, organ and vocal music given last month in the Minster, the major part

of the programme being borne by the Band of the Corps of Royal Engineers, conducted by Captain D. W. Jones. Mr. Palmer possesses a tenor voice of a pleasing quality and his singing is marked by keen musical insight.

He rendered two solos, accompanied by Sir Edward Bairstow at the piano, the exquisite "When thou art near," by Bach, and the well-known "Comfort Ye" and "Ev'ry valley" from Handel's "Messiah."

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home.

Manchester and Salford Blind Aid Society.—Paper shortage has been responsible for the curtailment of many Annual Reports, but some Societies seem to have been almost over-virtuous in this respect, and it is therefore pleasant to come across such a Report as this, which—while economical of space—does give a vivid picture of a busy year. Words are not wasted, but there is a record of much activity. Of the 1,573 persons on the Register, 1,285 are unemployables, and the work of the home teachers therefore bulks large. Nine social centres have been re-opened, picnics have been held in the parks in summer and concerts in winter, blind knitters have contributed over 500 garments to Comforts Funds, the Glee Party has resumed its activities, and the Sick and Benefit Branch and Clothing Club report a busy year. A note is given on the work of the Society's Homes.

British Association of Blind Esperantists.—In the Annual Report for 1942 Mr. W. P. Merrick, Penso, Shepperton, who has drawn up the Report, makes an interesting proposal in a note entitled "Of the Past and Future." Speaking of the post-war period, he says that in the countries at present under Nazi domination the restoration of services for the blind will be a task in which the blind themselves must play a leading part, by uniting, proclaiming their needs, and educating the public to provide for them. When freedom is restored "international correspondence will revive. Many and eager will be the demands about everything to do with blind welfare." He therefore suggests that in this country blind Esperantists should start an Information Group, and that all who think they might take on a correspondent, obtain or translate useful information or enlist the help of seeing friends should get into touch with him at the address given above. In this way it would be ensured that answers were

accurate and complete and over-lapping would be avoided. "So we who can do so little to hasten victory might play a worthy part in spreading international unity."

Birmingham Royal Institution.—An interesting account is given of the work done by this Institution in 1942-43 in caring for over 1,800 blind persons of all ages. The education of the young blind has continued smoothly in the Institution's three country houses at Wolverley, Tenbury Wells and Bewdley, while the work of the technical department is carried on at Harborne. Seventeen of the Royal Normal College pupils, for whom temporary war-time accommodation was provided, are to remain at the Birmingham Institution which becomes a secondary school under the new Board of Education scheme, and specialises in music, pianoforte tuning, shorthand and typing. Among the school activities a "marked enthusiasm for music" is noted, and recitals have been arranged for the pupils by CEMA. The Report includes a note on the Home Teachers' Refresher Course sponsored by the Southern Regional Association, which many of those present will remember gratefully in spite of the raids which meant hours spent discussing home-teaching problems in the air-raid shelter. It is satisfactory to learn that the damage caused to the workshops by the raid was made good before the end of the year.

East Suffolk County Association for the Blind.—The Report shows that 435 blind persons are cared for by the Association, and a tribute is paid to the work of the honorary local visitors, who, in these times of transport difficulty, give most valuable help in supplementing the visits paid by the home teachers. To-day, too, when organised social functions are specially difficult to arrange, the Association has, through the kindness of friends, been able to give no fewer than twenty-six parties for the blind at private houses. Voluntary funds show a record

total of £856, an increase of over £140 on the previous year. The Report records with regret the retirement of Miss Muirhead, Organising Secretary, on account of ill-health; her post has been filled by Miss D. R. Spooner, formerly a member of the home-teaching staff.

Manx Blind Welfare Society.—The Society has now been at work for five years, and is well established. It is able to record the passing of the Blind Persons Act, 1943, "the greatest advance in blind welfare that has ever been made in the Isle of Man," but points out that the fact of Government aid for the blind will not lessen the need for voluntary effort. Home teaching, the provision of social amenities, the supply of wireless sets, and much general welfare work still remains to be carried out by the Society, in close co-operation with the Government authority. The Report refers to the National Institute for the Blind as "the parent Society," from which a sum of over £230 has been received in the year.

Edinburgh Royal Blind Asylum and School.—The Report for 1942-3 is very brief, as befits a wartime publication, and unillustrated, except for a delightful baby on the cover—as attractive as the "great adventure" baby of last year. Three babies under two years have been admitted into the Nursery in the past year.

A note is given on the work of the School in preparing its pupils for professional careers, and the details given show that this work, though not the primary task of the Edinburgh Royal Blind Asylum, is giving carefully selected young persons openings in occupations other than those followed in sheltered workshops.

The Industrial department, with the help of several large Government contracts for basketware and bedding, is able to show an increase of nearly £3,360 over last year, and all departments, except the wire-spring mattress department, have been on full time, giving employment to 162 workers and trainees.

Royal Association in Aid of the Deaf and Dumb.—"The deaf," says the Report, "have been fully employed during the year, and the demand for their services has been greater than the supply of workers. Many are engaged in war work, and employers have rediscovered their value in industry. . . . Men who have been for years unemployed are now working." The Royal Association rejoices in this lightening of its labours in the material sphere, but looks upon it as merely an opportunity to extend the spiritual and social activities which are its *raison d'être*. There is so much to be done for

the totally deaf, for whom "life is only like figures moving on a picture screen, without subtitles or explanation," and the born-deaf can get only limited pleasure from reading owing to their limitations of vocabulary.

The Royal Association and the Missions to the Deaf afford spiritual teaching, social clubs, understanding friends, outdoor activities. They aim at giving the deaf a full life, building up character and saving them from "the tragedy of life without spiritual ideals."

Foreign.

Blind Relief Fund of Philadelphia.—The 40th Annual Report (for 1942-3) shows that in spite of the war, the work has continued, and the Friendly Visitor has paid nearly 2,000 visits, "up and down flights of rickety tenement stairs, meeting all kinds and conditions of people in all kinds of weather." It all sounds very like one of our English home teachers at work! The Annual Reunion Outing, with a water trip of eighty miles and "four kinds of sandwiches, apple, ice cream, iced cup cakes and candy for all," can only bring longing thoughts of past joys to English ears, and we read without surprise that "in midwinter we are often asked, 'Will you invite me to the outing next June?'" That the blind made a clear profit of £600 by selling leather, brushes, etc., obtained through interest-free loans is evidence of excellent work.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances :		s.	d.
19046	Arlen, H. That Old Black Magic, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19047	Grosz, W. Darling, Song Fox-Trot ..	0	6
19048	Kennedy, J. All our To-morrows, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19049	Popplewell, J. Really and Truly, Song Waltz	0	6

BRAILLE BOOKS.

Residents in the British Isles and throughout the British Empire are allowed a reduction of two-thirds of the cost prices given.

Fiction :

15862-8.	All This and Heaven Too. By Rachel Field. 7 vols. 7s. per vol. F480.
18302-4.	Murder in the Submarine Zone. By Carter Dickson. 3 vols. 5s. 6d. per vol. F166.

Forthcoming Pandas.

No. 70. Fear Comes to Chalfont. By Freeman Wills Crofts. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

A typical Chief Inspector French case, in which every clue is followed with impeccable patience and

skill. A corpse which keeps a rendezvous and French's young assistant, Sergeant Rollo, are attractions.

No. 71. Report from Tokyo. By J. C. Grew. 2 vols. 1s. net the set.

America's Ambassador to Tokyo for the ten years before Pearl Harbour tells why the Japanese think they can win this war, and what we must do to defeat them. The book owes its origin to the writer's alarm at finding how dangerously most Americans underrated their Japanese enemy.

MOON BOOKS.

4665-4669. Siamese Twin Mystery. By E. Queen. 5 vols. (Limited Edition.)

NEW APPARATUS.

Extracting Pliers.

Catalogue Number 9425. Direct thrust centre pin extracting pliers. Price 18s. Special price to blind individuals, 12s.

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES : 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

SIGHTED FEMALE HOME TEACHER for town area. State age and experience. Salary according to qualifications. Apply Secretary, South Beds. Blind Centre, Williamson Street, Luton.

HOME TEACHERS EXAMINATION, 1944. Candidates anxious to obtain guidance and qualified instruction to assist them in gaining the Diploma are invited to apply for particulars of a Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

ESSEX EDUCATION COMMITTEE. BLIND PERSONS ACTS, 1920-1938.

Applications are invited for two sighted Home Teachers of the Blind.

Particulars of the posts and forms of application can be obtained from the Chief Education Officer, County Offices, Chelmsford, on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF GRIMSBY SOCIETY FOR THE BLIND.

Appointment of sighted certificated Home Teacher and Visitor (woman).

Applications are invited for the above position.

Salary £182 per annum, plus war bonus, at present £36. 8s. per annum.

Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by three recent testimonials, should reach the Secretary by 30th September, 1943.

L. W.HEELER,

Municipal Offices,
Town Hall Square,
Grimsby.

Secretary.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.—Applications are invited for the position of sighted Home Teacher at a commencing salary of £169 per annum, plus cost of living bonus. The position is subject to the provisions of the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, and the successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination. Applications, with copies of testimonials, stating age, experience and qualifications, must reach the undersigned not later than September 30th, 1943.

A. C. V. THOMAS,
Superintendent and Secretary,
Royal Midland Institution for the Blind,
Chaucer Street, Nottingham.

N.I.B. NEEDS TYPEWRITERS.

If any friends of the blind have typewriters for sale, could the National Institute for the Blind have first chance? Standards or portables. Standard makes. In good working condition. Address: Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

An elderly **BLIND MAN** (81) and his **WIFE** (71), both Christians, are **WILLING TO SHARE OWN BUNGALOW** in pleasant district in Surrey with another Christian blind man and sighted wife in return for services in house and garden. Wife is confined to bed through arthritis. Apply in first instance to Honorary Secretary, Surrey Voluntary Association for the Blind, 5, Grove Crescent, Kingston-on-Thames.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF ROCHDALE.

Applications are invited from sighted females for the position of Home Teacher and Visitor of the Blind at a salary of £195 per annum (inclusive of travelling expenses) plus war bonus.

Applicants must hold the Certificate of the College of Teachers of the Blind and should have had experience of blind welfare work.

Applications should be addressed to the Director of Education, and should be delivered at the Education Office, Townhead, Rochdale, not later than 1st October, 1943.

HARRY BANN,

Town Hall, Rochdale.

Town Clerk.

NORTHERN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND. TRAINING COURSE FOR PROSPECTIVE HOME TEACHERS.

The Annual Training Course will be held commencing about the beginning of March, 1944, and occupying a period of six weeks. Approval of the Association must be obtained before admittance to the Course. Normally, candidates must be not less than twenty-one or more than forty years of age on the date of the 1944 Examination which they must undertake to sit, but, for the period of the war, applications from persons otherwise suitable but over forty years of age will be considered. Subsistence grants and travelling expenses will be paid on behalf of approved candidates residing within the Association's area.

Details and forms of application may be obtained from the Secretary, Northern Counties Association for the Blind, 17, Blenheim Terrace, Leeds, 2.

The New BEACON

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 322.

OCTOBER 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

THE BLIND IN MODERN RUSSIA—I

By F. LE GROS CLARK

THE health statistics in the old Czarist Russia were never very trustworthy ; and only in recent years has the country developed a statistical system comparable with our own. It was stated that in 1897 there were about 200 blind persons to every 100,000 inhabitants of Russia ; but the average was considerably higher in some of the minor nationalities, where health services were frequently very primitive. As for the total figures, they were recorded in 1886 as being 186,000. But in 1897 the numbers were 247,000 ; and Professor Golovin in 1910 stated in a book he published at that time that the number of blind persons had increased to more than 300,000.

It may be supposed that the period of the 1914-18 war and of the civil wars had its effect on the number of blind persons in Russia. Certainly by 1920, however, efforts were being made to deal with many of the primary causes of blindness ; and by the census of 1926 the numbers recorded had fallen to 234,000. This gives a proportion of 158 to every 100,000 inhabitants. It is said that since that date a continuous decline in numbers has been observable. Especially has this been due, no doubt, to the general attack upon such diseases as small-pox and the ophthalmia of new-born children, that has accompanied the medical awakening in modern Russia. The disease trachoma has been drastically reduced ; and surgical treatment for cataract has been far more widely practised than it was in the early part of the century.

It seems that in pre-Soviet days services relating to the blind had been little developed. There is no record of homes or institutions ; and no pension had been granted to civilian blind, though war-blinded men had a pension amounting to 3 roubles a month, which was in 1913 raised to 12 roubles. An organisation known as the Trusteeship of the Blind, based on private charity, made some attempts to alleviate the conditions of sufferers ; but it is doubtful whether more than 1,000 persons were accommodated in workshops for the blind and a similar number in the schools and classes for blind children.

The Soviet Government early passed a decree embracing blind persons under the provisions of the Social Insurance Scheme. When in a necessitous condition, the blind were to be pensioned or placed in invalid homes. Further legislation directed towards the amelioration of the lot of the blind has since followed. The Social Insurance authorities have the responsibility of dealing with pensions and with the maintenance of Homes for the invalidated blind persons. They also undertake the

industrial training of blinded workers and to this end support a certain amount of scientific research into method. The Education Authorities, on the other hand, naturally control the education of blind children.

The largest organisation for the blind in the country is the All-Russian Society for the Blind. It was founded in 1923, at a time when the country was emerging from the civil war and setting out on the task of reconstruction. Its statutes are approved by the Government; and apparently it is split into several independent societies, operating in the various republics of the Union. It has large funds at its disposal, which in 1935 amounted to more than six million roubles; doubtless its subsequent budgets have been of the same proportions.

The functions of the Society are described simply as those of socially enlightening the blind, of training them according to their individual capacity and of organising employment for them in various branches of national life. "The society aims," state the basic rules, "at encouraging initiative, mutual aid and independence among the blind."

By 1938 the society had some 432 branches or groups. These branches consisted of 247 production units, presumably workshops, etc., 84 units organised on a territorial basis, 65

student groups and 36 groups resident in Homes for the infirm. The total membership seems to be somewhere between twenty and thirty thousand, though this probably applies to the area of Russia proper and omits the many smaller republics. According to rather limited reports dated for 1935 it appears that a number of blind persons had been elected to serve on local urban or rural councils; a figure of no less than 57 is mentioned. Fifteen thousand blind persons were further said about the same period to be either working or training in various occupations.

While a number of special workshops are maintained, mainly of 100-200 employees, efforts are also made to incorporate the blind in the ordinary factories. Here special concessions are frequently made for them by the management and the trade unions, e.g., the provision of free meals in the factory restaurants, permission to purchase certain goods at advantageous prices and special allowances of produce from the factory farms and market gardens. It is stated that the society has the vigorous motto: "Keep in step with the sighted"; and no doubt it is in accord with this challenge that attempts are made to find places for the blind among their sighted fellows in all appropriate enterprises.

(To be concluded)

HOME NEWS

New Precision Instrument for Blind Workers.

—A new instrument, designed by British engineers, which enables blind workers to check the accuracy of parts in engineering shops to a tenth of a thousandth of an inch was one of many striking exhibits at the demonstration of precision measuring instruments opened last month at the Manchester Corporation electricity showrooms.

Checking is done by means of bells ringing in different tones—a high-pitched note for a part which is too small and a low-pitched note for one too large. When the part is "dead right" for size the two bells ring together. This instrument will soon be in use for checking parts of tanks, aeroplanes, and many other war products. It was demonstrated at the exhibition by Mr. William Mitchell, of Penny Street, Salford, who has been blind since birth. The absorption of many more blind workers into industry through its use has been forecast.

The instrument is a development of the visual indicator, which shows whether parts are under-size, over-size, or correct, by an arrangement of amber, green, and red lights, and the demonstration was arranged by Messrs. E. H. Jones (Machine Tools), Limited, of London.

Aberdeen Asylum Centenary.—By consent of the King, Aberdeen Asylum for the Blind will now be known as the Royal Aberdeen Asylum for the Blind. This brings the institution into line with others of a like kind in Scotland. Announcement of the honour was made by Mr. John S. Scott, Chairman of the Board of Governors, at a luncheon held early this month in the Caledonia Hotel, Aberdeen, to mark the institution's centenary. Sir Thomas Mitchell, the Lord Provost, congratulated the institution on this occasion, and the guests included representatives from local authorities in Aberdeen, Banff and Kincardine, and from the institutions for the blind in Dundee, Edinburgh

and Glasgow. Ex-Baillie T. S. Park, Glasgow, replying to the toast, said that co-operation between the various Scottish institutions catering for the blind was never closer than at present. Managers met continually to compare notes and, as far as possible, they worked as one body.

Farthings for the Fund.—The Devon County Association for the Blind informs us that Miss Maunder, a blind woman of Dawlish, Devon, has collected 1,300 farthings for the N.I.B. Fund.

Western Counties Refresher Course.—The Western Counties Association for the Blind held a Refresher Course for Home Teachers from Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Exeter and Somerset at the West of England Institution for the Blind, Exeter, from August 30th to September 4th. Accommodation being limited it was not possible to include the Home Teachers from the whole area, but another course is to be arranged in the spring when the Home Teachers from Bath, Bristol, Gloucester City, Gloucestershire, Plymouth and Wiltshire will be invited.

The lecturers gave interesting and helpful talks on the following activities:—Telephony and Braille Shorthand, Diseases of the Eye (by an Ophthalmic Surgeon), National Health Insurance and Pensions, Functions of Assistance Board, Deaf and Dumb and Deaf-Blind, Mental Deficiency Act, Blind Persons Act 1938 (Recovery of Costs), Basketry from waste material, and the Education of Blind and the functions of the College of Teachers of the Blind. The Association was indebted, in addition to the lecturers, to the Committee and staff of the West of England Institution for the Blind for their help and for the use of the rooms; to the members of the technical staff of the Institution, Miss Davies and Mr. Jelfs, for their expert handicraft instruction, to the County Secretaries and their staff who gave clerical help and assistance with the compiling of the programme, and to the Home Teachers themselves for their enthusiastic co-operation and interest which made the course an unqualified success.

Greater London Fund and the Sisterhood.—The Annual Meeting of the Sisterhood, held at the Caxton Hall on October 8th, was a coming-of-age celebration; the Mayor of Westminster presided and gave those present a civic welcome.

The distinguished persons on the platform included the Mayors and Mayoresses of Islington, Lewisham, Woolwich and Dagenham, Dame Irene Vanbrugh, Captain Sir Beachcroft Towse, V.C., Mr. Hyde Thomson (Chairman of the Greater London Fund), Lady Fulton (Chairman of the Ladies Social Committee of the Fund) and Miss Rose Parker (Ex-President of the London Brotherhood and Sisterhood Federation).

After the Mayor's speech of welcome, Sir Beachcroft Towse told those present that the meeting had been honoured by a message from Her Majesty the Queen, which was read aloud. He congratulated the Sisterhoods on having collected over £23,000 since they had initiated the work, and thanked them on behalf of the blind of London not only for the munificence of the sum, but for all the kindness it represented. He told them that one of the Sisterhoods had presented him with a birthday cake (to be given to one of the Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies) in honour of the event, and said that he was rather glad that though it had been made for him it only covered twenty-one years. Miss Edith Johnston, Secretary of the Sisterhood Appeal, presented the year's Report, and said that the trophy went once again to the Harecourt Congregational Church Women's Own, which had collected over £136 in the year; thirteen other Sisterhoods had collected over £50 each, and qualified for certificates.

Dame Irene Vanbrugh presented the trophy and certificates and recalled the deep interest taken in the work by her sister. The proceedings also included an address by Miss Rose Parker and a concert by blind artists, and was followed by tea.

Games of Patience for Blind Players.—Although Patience cards marked in Braille have been on the market for some years, the National Institute has not hitherto produced a Patience board for blind players, who find playing on an ordinary table difficult. A board has now been designed, which should make the game much easier, and it is obtainable from the National Institute at a cost of 7s. 6d.; a special price of 5s. is allowed the individual blind purchaser. Letterpress and Braille instructions for five games are given with each board, and these are also obtainable separately at a cost of 6d. (letterpress) and 2d. net (Braille). Ordinary Patience cards with Braille markings cost 2s. 3d. per pack (1s. 3d. to the individual blind purchaser) and plain cards with Braille markings are sold at 5d. per pack (3d. to blind purchasers). As most good Patience games require two packs, packs are sold in pairs, but single packs can of course be obtained.

The Patience board measures 19 by 12 inches, and has two differently designed sides. On what is called the "Squares" side there are 25 compartments, arranged in 5 rows of 5, each large enough to take a Patience card; sunk into the board between each of the compartments there is a round hole, to help the player to lift his card more easily. A single compartment runs the width of the board at the bottom. On

the "Streets" side, the lower part of the board is divided into 8 compartments, each 8 inches by 2, with 8 "squares" above them.

It is hoped that blind players who purchase the boards will make any suggestions that occur to them if they consider that the boards might be further improved.

FOREIGN NEWS

Seeing by Ear Training.—In the work of reconstruction of Jewish life in Palestine which has been proceeding since the last war, great importance has been attached to all social services, and not the least in specialised training for the blind.

The theory that there is a relationship between the human voice and the type of body which produces it, similar to that between the sound of a musical instrument and its shape and construction, is the basis of a system of seeing for the blind which was demonstrated recently by its inventor, Mr. Raphael Mizrahi, at the Jewish Institute for the Blind in Jerusalem.

Mr. Mizrahi, who is a teacher of music at the Institute and is himself blind, maintains that a blind man, if his hearing is sufficiently developed, can determine from a person's voice not only his age, height, shape of face and type of mouth, but

even the colour of his eyes, skin and hair. Picking at random out of an assorted audience of doctors, psychologists, musicians and journalists, Mr. Mizrahi described his choices with amazing accuracy. The inventor claims that the system, although not infallible, is as generally accurate as can be desired. While demanding a very high degree of ear training, it is a system which can be learned by nearly any blind person with application.

Cardinal Gives Home for the Blind.—The personal gift of a large house has been made to the diocese of Boston as a home for blind people by Cardinal O'Connell, Archbishop of Boston.

The 84-year-old Cardinal has shown a lifelong interest in the welfare of the blind and he himself founded the Catholic Guild for the Blind in Boston Archdiocese.

PLACEMENT OF THE BLIND IN FACTORIES

A DETAILED statement has been prepared by the National Institute for the Blind on the results of the Employment Campaign to date, and it is hoped to make it available before long to those who are particularly concerned. The information with regard to employment in factories, as distinct either from skilled work performed by specially trained people and from unskilled work of messenger or attendant type, is worthy of particular attention.

Regional and Local Figures.

Excluding placements which failed at the start, and subject to the qualifications that some of the Returns from local areas are out of date and others non-existent, the total figures recorded by the National Institute of factory placements is 1,116 men and women. Division according to regions is :—

Southern Region	..	..	546
Northern Counties	..	..	357
Western Counties	..	..	49
Wales and Monmouthshire	..	..	52

These figures do not include ex-Service men placed by St. Dunstan's, who, in all regions, total 112.

Areas where outstanding success has been achieved are Birmingham, 168 ; Leicester, 46 ;

Southampton, 45 ; Middlesex, 51. Figures for local areas in the Northern Counties are not available, but the best figures appear to be Liverpool, 40 ; Oldham, 19. The actual totals need to be related to the blind population of each area in question. Expressed as percentages of the total blind population the facts are :—

	Per cent.
England and Wales	 1.3
Southern Region	 1.4
Northern Counties	 1.3
Wales and Monmouthshire	 0.9
Western Counties	 0.8
Birmingham	 12.8
Southampton	 11.8
Leicester	 8.8
Liverpool	 2.9
Oldham	 6.1
Middlesex	 1.9

The percentage figures must, of course, be looked at in the light of the industrial conditions, and particularly the factory employment opportunities of each of the areas. The conditions in a concentrated, highly industrialised area such as Birmingham are obviously more favourable to placement than the mainly rural Western Counties. On the other hand, the war has brought many new industrial undertakings,

some small and some of great size, into what were rural areas. After giving full weight to those considerations there are still remarkable discrepancies. The figure for London is only 0.8 per cent. That would have been much worse if the National Institute had not itself undertaken direct placement work in the County of London area. The contrast with Middlesex is striking; that with Leicester and Southampton is astonishing.

Wages.

The National Association of Workshops recently asked for returns from its members, and has obtained details of wage rates paid to 379 blind factory employees. Two hundred and eighty-nine of these were men, 90 were women; 208 ex-workshop employees; 37 Home Workers; and 20 trainees; 112 were "unemployables." The men's rates vary from 60s. to 106s. per week; women's from 43s. to 70s. per week.

A similar investigation has been made by the National Institute into the earnings of a representative group of 67 male factory employees, all of whom were previously regarded as "unemployable" for the purpose of the Blind Persons' Act and as "incapable for work" under the National Health Insurance Acts. Weekly wage rates were found to vary from 39s. to 110s. Time rates varied from 1s. 2d. to 1s. 8d. per hour. In general, London rates are some 20 per cent. higher than provincial rates.

Generally speaking, the figures indicate that the wages earned by blind operatives in factories are higher, in many cases much higher, than

what would be obtained in sheltered employment.

Employability.

There is ample evidence to show that industrialists are abandoning their belief that the blind are unemployable, but it is questionable whether blind welfare agencies in some parts of the country are yet convinced that the so-called "unemployable blind" can make an effective contribution to industry. The fact that blind factory employees require neither domiciliary assistance nor augmentation of earnings and that the blind persons now in industry are saving the rates at least £70,000 per annum, should in itself be a potent stimulus to the war-time employment campaign. The majority of those placed went blind in the middle of their working life, and industrial employment is, for them, a return to a way of life they understand. The sense of "buoyant independence" as a blind viewer described it recently is converting "difficult cases" into self-confident, efficient blind men.

A comprehensive list of operations proved to be suitable for blind workers, men or women, or either, has been compiled to accompany the statement. It enumerates 325 different types of job, and classifies them according to such important considerations as their probable availability in peace time and whether guiding sight is required. The list, with the accompanying notes, should be of considerable value not only in developing the campaign, but in applying the lessons learned to peace-time conditions.

R E C E N T P U B L I C A T I O N S

New Braille Primer.

A new Braille Primer, entitled "Complete Introduction to Braille," has been prepared by the National Institute for the Blind. The first part is already in circulation, the second will be issued within the next fortnight, and the final part will be available shortly.

This Primer has been prepared with the advice of a Committee of Home Teachers and Braille experts. It is designed for the use of adult learners who have a teacher to help them. Each exercise has been subjected to practical tests in the Institute's Homes of Recovery. The stories and anecdotes, which form the subject matter of the lessons, are designed to interest the average reader.

A feature of this Primer is that 30 letters per line are used in the first five lessons of Part I. The sixteen per cent. more space between each letter which this gives makes the preliminary lessons much less puzzling for pupils with a dull sense of touch. Throughout the Primer signs and contractions are introduced according to the orthodox sequence of Braille. Part II contains a series of brief anecdotes which are designed to consolidate the knowledge gained in Part I before the pupil proceeds to the signs of columns 2 to 7, and the abbreviations. Each part has a loose-leaf type of binding which will make it possible for the teacher to insert additional subject matter to meet the needs of special pupils.

REFORM OF SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

By E. G. DOWDELL, M.A., D.Phil.

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ALL who are anxious to ensure that blind children should have the best possible start in life must welcome the signs of increasingly active interest in the problem of re-organising and generally improving our schools. True, little tangible benefit resulted from the thorough enquiry conducted some years ago by a joint committee of the College of Teachers and the National Institute, so that one must not take it for granted that promising plans and convincing criticisms will bear fruit in the near future. However, the omens look more favourable than heretofore, and it therefore behoves us to give careful consideration to the various proposals that are in the air. If the problems are examined carefully and disinterestedly alike by those immediately concerned and by some who have had opportunities of viewing these matters from a little distance, it may be hoped that something like an agreed programme of reform will emerge.

Of the need for improvement there seems to be no doubt whatever. One might expect the College of Teachers to adopt a comparatively complacent or conservative attitude, seeing that the devoted work of so many of its members has undeniably achieved a great deal already. Yet the representatives of the College supported far-reaching changes at the time of the previous enquiry, and their committee which has recently again been surveying the field may be expected to recommend substantial reforms. Probably no one who knows the actual state of affairs could deny that some of our schools are bad or that all might be better. The only real argument can be on the direction and extent of the changes that are called for. Here, again, it is generally held that blind schools are too numerous—perhaps most would say: "Much too numerous." Adequate staffing, grading and equipment can only be provided for small schools at grossly excessive cost, and the gratifying fall in the number of blind children makes this contention ever more cogent.

At first sight, the easiest solution may seem to be simply to eliminate some existing schools. Some have disappeared in recent years and a few others are faced with special difficulties which may bring them to an end within measurable time. That may suggest that drastic measures are unnecessary, and the cautious reformer may legitimately point out that a good deal could be achieved if the Board

of Education would use its authority to eliminate bad schools. Indeed, one may fairly say that the present position would have been a good deal better than it is, had the Board been less tolerant in cases where firmness was required. However, we should be unwise to expect such an outburst of ruthless activity in Whitehall that a substantial number of schools will be condemned as unfit. Something may be hoped for from voluntary closing and amalgamation by agreement. Local loyalties and jealousies are, however, serious obstacles to progress along these lines. Human nature being what it is, one cannot be surprised if most members of the governing body and staff of Bradchester School react unsympathetically to a proposal that their school should be closed and its pupils transferred to Manford, in order that the larger area may be served by a bigger and better school. Unless there is some obvious reason for preferring one to the other—difference of efficiency, suitability of premises, financial strength or the like—there is no conclusive answer to the retort that they do not intend to let the fruits of their past labours be wasted, the generous intentions of local benefactors flouted, their children sent far from home, their teachers disturbed in their reasonable expectations of permanent employment and so forth. There will usually be the feeling that the other party could more easily make the sacrifices and that a little show of firmness may induce them to do so. Arguments about the relative merits of the two schools are obviously relevant and, if they once begin to be bandied about, the chance of agreement will dwindle to vanishing point.

This points to the rather paradoxical conclusion that a more radical scheme, such as that outlined by Mr. Eagar in the August issue of *THE NEW BEACON* may be easier to bring about than reform by stages and mutual agreement. Certainly, the element of jealousy would not block the early negotiations if it were not known in advance which schools were likely to be taken and which left. In fact, if we are prepared to be as drastic as Mr. Eagar—and there is much to be said for this course—it may be that none of our elementary schools would really retain their identity. Their finances would be merged in the all-embracing central body and the few much larger schools might be virtually new creations. Probably some existing buildings would be considered suitable, at least as nuclei,

so that some of the new schools would be on the sites of existing ones ; but their character and functions would not be the same. Existing institutions would presumably be represented on the national body, but would not necessarily have a direct voice in the management of any particular school. While, therefore, it will be necessary to persuade or compel schools to subordinate their individual interests to those of a wider whole, this will not take the peculiarly distasteful form of surrendering to an old rival. Moreover, the adoption of a comprehensive scheme would make it much easier to guarantee all teachers continued employment. When the amalgamation of two schools is being considered, it may well be that some teachers appear superfluous or unsuitable for the combined unit, yet governing bodies are likely to insist that none of their employees shall suffer. Doubtless the Board of Education, being favourable to the policy, would use its good offices to secure other posts ; but it could not give a guarantee, seeing that it has no power to compel a school to employ any particular teacher. If, however, the staffs are all pooled, the difficulty of fitting in any individual must be much less. Should there be some good teachers who, strictly speaking, are redundant and cannot be properly placed elsewhere, the central body might be willing to carry them on temporarily, since vacancies may be expected soon to occur through normal wastage. It would also be in a better position than an individual school to make a niche for any teacher who was not quite up to standard, but who—possibly on account of long years of service—it was not desired to dismiss. It must also be remembered that some schools are, and some are not attached to workshops. From the educational point of view it may be desirable to combine one of the latter with one forming part of a mixed institution ; but, if it has substantial assets, the governing body may quite properly feel that, having been built up on the basis of a purely educational appeal, they cannot be handed over to an institution which may use them to make good trading losses.

Radical re-organisation is to be recommended for another, much more fundamental, reason. Most blind children are now under the care of institutions which are agencies for employment as well as education. This has certain advantages in relation to those children who should in any case seek their livelihood in one of the trades undertaken by workshops or home-workers' schemes. There is, however, the drawback that supreme authority is often in the hands of an official selected for industrial, rather than

educational, reasons. The head of the school may then have insufficient liberty of action and the governing body be ill-suited to take decisions on the broader questions of educational policy. Moreover, the existence of workshops and industrial training centres in close proximity to schools can hardly fail to introduce a bias in many cases when the children's future careers are being considered. Parents and teachers are liable to take it for granted, without proper consideration, that a child should continue under the care of the same institution for technical training and employment. Even where the various departments are in different places, the shadow of the institution is likely to obscure the view of wider employment prospects. This might not be a very serious matter if workshops offered a wide range of vocations, including some of those affording real economic independence and giving scope for the exercise of intellectual and administrative ability. As it is, the choice is almost completely restricted to a small group of manual trades. These have of late found the economic environment very unfavourable ; yet the canalising tendency of our institutional set-up has maintained the flow of new recruits. But for this, it is inconceivable that in selecting the future occupation of blind children, the decision should in so many cases be the same as fifty or a hundred years ago when conditions were quite different. Though the allegation cannot be proved, there seems to be no doubt that many blind children have been directed into occupations giving scope for less independent and constructive lives than others which were within their capacities. To say this does not necessarily imply that heads of institutions are consciously swayed by the desire to retain their abler pupils, so as to ensure a higher standard of efficiency and better trading returns in their workshops, though this possibility is inherent in the present system and cannot be altogether ruled out. However that may be, the force of inertia alone is very powerful. This whole matter must be viewed in connection with the recently published report of the Tomlinson Committee and the developments which may be expected to result. We may hope that there will be a widening of the outlets for blind people, both in self-supporting employment and in mixed workshops catering for various kinds of disability. That would necessitate a thorough overhaul of our special blind workshops—at least, a reduction in their number or an arrangement by which each would specialise on one or two trades, in order that the defects already arising from the small scale at which they operate shall not be intensified by the reduction in the total number of their employees. This

would be greatly facilitated by separating the departments for employment and education, so that the best organisation for each can be selected on its merits. Because it is desirable that Bradchester and Manford schools should combine, it does not necessarily follow that their workshops can best be dealt with by amalgamation or by a simple agreement that each shall specialise on half the number of trades now practised. Actually, there is much to be said for transferring all blind workshops to the employment corporation recommended by the Committee, and this would disrupt the *status quo* so completely as to leave the field open for thorough-going reconstruction.

The answer to the question whether schools and vocational training centres should continue in partnership is not quite so clear. The arguments against the workshop connection apply with less force in this case, though it remains true that impartial choice of a career is made more difficult when there is a well-defined path leading straight ahead, even if there is a slight break to be expected at the age of twenty. On the other hand, continuation courses for trainees can usually be arranged more easily if there is a staff of ordinary teachers available. Against this must be set the argument that industrial training will be more realistic and practical if it is conducted in close touch with the place of future employment. In the case of the Royal Normal College, separation of school and training departments would have serious drawbacks. However, it is an exceptional school and has already undergone some re-organisation which, *mutatis mutandis*, is in harmony with the proposals under discussion. Consequently, it might well be left outside the new body, though in very close touch with it. The Tomlinson Report is relevant to this question also, for the greatly extended training facilities which the Ministry of Labour is urged to establish may provide openings for many blind people, while the trades for which our existing training departments could conveniently cater may become of much less importance. On the whole, it seems advisable at this early stage of the discussion to keep an open mind on the question whether the new educational body should provide vocational training. It should be remembered, however, that even if the answer is in the affirmative, it does not follow that the training centres should be attached to schools.

The merits of the proposed national body can obviously not be fully discussed independently of its constitution. This is a complex problem, requiring detailed examination; and it is not likely to be solved unless a strong lead is given

by the Board of Education and a co-operative and public-spirited attitude is adopted by those many bodies with reasonable claims to participate in its management. Two general points may be made in advance. One—already laid down emphatically by Mr. Eagar—is that the new organisation should be an independent educational agency, not a branch of some other institution with quite different objects. We need a group of people who can be relied on to take good decisions upon educational questions, unhampered by being a sub-committee of some other authority whose members are not thus qualified. Secondly, while unification of finance and the direction of general policy has great advantages, we do not want bureaucratic management and we do want each school to have enough independence to give room for some diversity and experimenting and for the creation of a healthy local loyalty on the part of both staff and pupils. That means that each school should have a governing body of its own, composed largely of members of the supreme council, but including persons with local and other special interests and enjoying some freedom of action within the framework of general regulations.

Constitutional reform is, of course, only a preliminary to the improvement of the content of education. It will not be justified unless real improvements are made. To discuss what these should be would, however, take us much too far afield. Actually, there is already a considerable body of authoritative literature on the subject—for instance in the report of the Joint Committee previously mentioned. It seems reasonable at the moment to concentrate upon creating the structure which gives the best hope of securing a large measure of beneficial change. The conclusion appears to be in favour of a unified national body with a limited amount of decentralisation. If this is accepted, we must address ourselves to the task of devising a constitution which, as far as is humanly possible, will ensure that the right decisions will be taken. This limited objective will make a great call upon the ability, patience and disinterestedness of those immediately concerned, and it is earnestly to be hoped that these will not be found wanting.

College of Teachers' Report on Replanning.—The Report of the Sub-Committee of the College of Teachers of the Blind on Replanning has just been issued as a Supplement to the current issue of *The Teacher of the Blind*. It will be fully reviewed in our next issue together with *Some Hints for the Newly-Blind and their Friends* (constituting Supplementary Chapter III of the Handbook for Home Teachers of the Blind), which has also been issued as a Supplement to *The Teacher of the Blind*.

MAPS FOR THE BLIND

By LEONARD HARDCASTLE

II.—Certification of Blindness in Relation to Maps

(i) Certification of Blindness Defined

By the term "Certification of Blindness" is meant (1) "to be so blind as to be unable to derive any benefit from the educational methods used in a normal school"; (2) "the inability to perform *any* work for which eyesight is essential." The first of these covers the Education Act of 1893, and the second the Blind Persons Act, 1920. In the year 1933 definite ophthalmological standards of vision which could be interpreted by any ophthalmic surgeon—or anyone else sufficiently interested to take a little trouble to understand them—were laid down to define the precise conditions of blindness of each person. The "ophthalmological terms" are expressed in degrees of visual acuity and the field of vision.

The ability to see or how much or little a person can see, expressed in terms of visual acuity, is based on the test chart originally designed by Professor Snellen in 1862. This chart is familiar to all who have visited an ophthalmic surgeon or optician. It consists of lines of letters of various sizes ranging from a single letter at the top $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches (90 mm.) square to several smaller at the bottom .35 inches (9 mm.) square.

These letters are scientifically calculated to be read by a fully sighted person at definite specific distances. The largest letter should be read at 60 metres, the next line—two letters—at 36 metres, then 24 metres, 18 metres, 12 metres, 9 metres and finally 6 metres. A person to be tested by means of this chart is placed at a distance of 6 metres (20 feet) from it and asked to read the chart down as far as he can. If he can read the top letter only his visual acuity is expressed as 6/60; if he should manage to reach the third line—the 24 metre one—his visual acuity would be expressed as 6/24, and so on, until a person who reached the bottom line, having read the whole chart, would be expressed as 6/6.

For the purposes of the Education Act a child with a visual acuity of less than 6/60 is certifiable as blind and should be recommended for education in a blind school by "methods applicable only to the blind." *For the purposes of the Blind Persons Act a person cannot be certified as blind unless his visual acuity is less than 3/60.* There are a few exceptions to this rule, which are fully stated in the appendix to Circular 1353, but 3/60 is the standard to be accepted generally.

This is not the place to discuss the injustice in this discrepancy between the two Acts, but whilst it exists as the Government's official view on the matter, it must be accepted, and it affects the teacher's task accordingly.

By the term "field of vision" is meant the range of vision possessed by each eye separately, or both together. This can be mapped out scientifically with an instrument known as a perimeter, *provided the patient can be persuaded to keep his eyes still and look at one fixed point during the test.* If we cover up one eye and look straight ahead at one fixed point, it will be discovered that we can see objects for a very wide angle on the temporal side of the face, but not quite so wide on the nasal side, because the nose itself obstructs the view. The angle of vision is as wide as 90 degrees on the one side and 60 on the other. Thus each eye has a field of vision of 150 degrees on the horizontal plane. With both eyes together the field is as wide as 180 degrees. Thus there is an area where the field of each eye overlaps the other—an area 60 degrees on either side of the point of fixation—giving an angle of 120 degrees in all. This is the field of binocular vision. Vertically the field of vision is 50 degrees above the central point and 70 degrees below it. These angles vary slightly as to whether the person has sunken eye sockets or not.

In certain cases where the field of vision is *considerably restricted*, a person whose visual acuity is above 3/60 may be certified as blind. All details are contained in the Appendix to Circular 1353.

(ii) Visual Acuity and Field of Vision applied to Maps

It will be seen that accuracy of normal vision is minute, whilst the field of vision is very large. As I look out from the window at this moment, I can see four houses in front of me and a tree high above one of them in the background. The Emily Grey roses are blooming, the hollyhocks are growing up nicely and the lawn looks much better since it was mown a day or two ago. The rain is beating against the window panes. Those are my surroundings at the moment. What would a totally blind person observe of all this? The music of the wireless in the room and the sound of the rain on the window pane. That is all. In order to observe the beauty of the Emily Greys, he would have to go out to them, and examine a few of the flowers one by

one, and even then we have no knowledge of what his appreciation will be. *It will certainly not be the same as ours.* On his way to them he may note the severity or mildness of the rain and the dampness of the ground. But notice; the blind person had to move out of the room, across the lawn, to examine the roses *one by one*. He cannot appreciate the picture as a whole in the same manner as his sighted friend. He will, it is true, if he is a person of any intelligence, be able to build up some composite, resultant picture, and of how he arrives at that picture we may have a faint idea, but what that picture actually is to him *we do not know*. Nor are we ever likely to know. The person who has seen and gone blind may give us a little help, but it will be very little because he has the memory of his sight to assist him, but the "always blind" will never be able to tell us *for they can have no possible idea of what a visual perception is like*. Many blind persons resent this statement and write protesting letters to the Press about it, but every word they write is only further evidence against them, for they use sighted terms to express their tactile perceptions. They talk about "looking at" or "seeing" things, when, of course, they are actually feeling them. Mind you, I should not like to revert to the days of assiduously avoiding the word "seeing" to a blind person, and am in favour of using a perfectly natural attitude towards them, but when one is dealing with scientific investigation or social welfare for the benefit of the blind themselves, these distinctions must be drawn.

And how about maps? If a large map is set up in front of a class of fully sighted scholars, they can all see it as a whole immediately. The details may be observed later, but the whole is recognised first. A map produced in masses of black and white would be seen most easily, because rays of light are radiated from the white areas and none from the black. Hence the white mass stimulates the retina and not the black. A map in which linear demarcation only is used, is most difficult to see, because the lines themselves will only make corresponding contrasts on the retina. Thus if the lines are fairly fine, it is only a person with good eyesight who would be able to distinguish them, whereas in the mass area maps, corresponding mass areas of the retina are stimulated and so recognition is made much easier. The same argument can also be applied to coloured maps, the various colours producing corresponding changes on the retina. With persons having defective sight, the colours used should contrast sharply with one another and not pass through

any graded colour cycle. For example, yellow surrounded by dark brown, red, green, and purple stand out very well, but yellow next to white would not do so well, so it is advisable to keep yellow from coastal areas if you are leaving the sea white. It is a different matter if the sea is coloured blue.

Thus, a person with a visual acuity of 6/60, or a little under, may be able to distinguish the various masses of colouring on a very large map, say 8 feet by 10, at 6 metres quite easily, but any names on it would be of no use to him at that distance unless they were in 6/60 letters, that is, each letter occupying a space of $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches square. *How many names could be inserted in a map at that size?* On the other hand, if we name towns and rivers in $1\frac{1}{2}$ inch letters, we satisfy a person with an acuity of 6/24 and the 6/60 person could read them at $2\frac{1}{2}$ metres. Since 6/24 represents the Government's recommendation of the standard of visual acuity for certification of partial sight to be in need of education in a school specially recognised to take such cases, this is the best size of lettering to adopt for most names, and it is not too inconvenient for a 6/60 person. This is the standard of lettering we have adopted in Leeds.

But when the 6/60 person comes nearer to the map to read the names, he sees less of it than at a distance. He cannot see the map as a whole, and read the names upon it as a fully sighted person could. He has to move his head up and down and from side to side, building up his knowledge piece by piece. *All this requires additional strain, energy and mental effort.* This point should not be overlooked; it is vitally important. If a child's visual acuity is below 6/60 he is certifiable for training in a blind school. But consider the uncertified adult with an acuity of just over 3/60. He could distinguish, somehow, the masses of colour, or as much of them as came into his field of vision at 3 metres. This would be *one quarter* of what his 6/60 friend would see. The names in 6/24 he would read at a distance of 1 metre!

So finally, we arrive at the standard of visual acuity, in which both child and adult are certifiable as blind—below 3/60 Snellen. The use of sight is for all useful purposes negligible, and visual impressions are of very little value, and so tactile perceptions have to be developed. In other words they have to be educated by methods "applicable only to the blind."

In the next two articles, we shall study maps for the blind, a history of their development up to the present day and suggested improvements for the future.

(To be continued)

SUCCESS OR FAILURE ?

THE Chairman of the Southern Regional Association, in a letter printed on a later page of this issue, refers reproachfully to our last Editorial article "The One Fundamental Principle." The account he gives of that article is somewhat farcical, and readers may judge the value of his letter as a whole by reading it in conjunction with the dated statement of fact which follows it. We regret that the business of the National Institute's Charter should be discussed at all in these pages. It is largely technical and essentially the business of the Council itself. But it is important that the misunderstandings which have been created by partial publicity should be dispelled by honest discussion.

The question really at issue is the success or failure of the Co-ordination Scheme. That is a matter of importance not only to blind welfare, but to all who are concerned with the possibility of co-ordinating any social service in which a variety of local agencies work in conjunction with local authorities and other public bodies. The Scheme for the Co-ordination of Services for the Blind, initiated by the Report of the Joint Blind Welfare Committee in 1936, is the most comprehensive and far-reaching attempt yet made to bring together every interest for the effective well-being of the beneficiaries concerned. The success or failure of our Co-ordination Scheme may be a precedent of wide application.

In the light of the issues raised by the action of certain elements in the Regions, the intention of the Scheme (by virtue of which the Regions exist) must be recalled. It aimed at eliminating rivalries and obtaining reasonable uniformity in the work of local agencies performing services to the blind on behalf of the responsible local authorities. It did not contemplate any weakening of the voluntary principle; on the contrary, it aimed—to use its own words—at rendering "voluntary service better able to continue in the future the valuable aid it has given in the past to the authorities charged by statute with the welfare of blind persons." As a means to that end it defined the functions of National, Regional and Local bodies, each of which would play its co-ordinated part in promoting the welfare of the blind on the essential hypothesis that it would operate in its own sphere and co-operate wholeheartedly with the others.

It may fairly be said that from the national and local point of view the aim has been achieved. The National Institute for the Blind, having opened its doors to the widest obtainable measure of representative government, has maintained its work and continued to develop it, complementing and reinforcing the work of local authorities and local voluntary societies throughout the country. The local agencies are profiting by the better understanding, which co-ordination has promoted, of the nature of their work and, though in many cases sadly under-staffed, they are carrying on their indispensable activities more effectively than ever. The doubtful element is the Regional bodies, which are not yet fully performing the functions allocated to them and are apparently desiring to exercise other functions. We have no desire to disparage the good work they are doing in certain directions; but the test of their utility lies in the value given to the blind for the expenditure of the considerable sums of money allocated to them under the Local Government Act by the local authorities of their own areas, and the proof of their value to blind welfare is to be sought in their desire and ability to promote harmony in it. They are essentially intermediary bodies; if they should become the breeding grounds of partisan policies, inconsistent with, or actively hostile to, the aim of co-ordination, and focus-points of old hostilities of which the vast majority of workers for the blind are sick and tired, they would cease to have value or utility.

It is to the last degree unfortunate that representation of local agencies through the Regions on the National Institute's Council should have resulted in what is patently an attempt to prevent the Institute's Agreement with the Joint Blind Welfare Committee being implemented. It is ironical that the bodies which would benefit most by the new Incorporation are the Regions, to which it would give a new status. The question which then arises, whether the Regions wish to have such status, depends entirely on their acceptance or non-acceptance of the principles embodied in the Co-ordination Scheme. If that is not the status they want then other means must be found of ensuring continuance of contact and effective co-partnership between local authorities, local and other voluntary associations and the National Institute. It is no one's interest that the dignity and the efficiency of the N.I.B. should be impaired. Caucus methods provoke their own re-action. Group A (Regional Bodies)

members of the Institute's Council have precisely the same rights as other members of the Council—and no more. The Institute exercises great responsibilities to the general public which supports its work as well as to the blind themselves. It owes it to them as well as to itself that its time should not be taken up by interminable contentions based on groundless suspicions, that business, entrusted to members of its Council as representatives appointed to use their own judgment and to make their personal contribution to the work of the Institute, should not be placed while in the course of transaction before bodies of people who can have no real conception of the nature of that business, and that it should not be discredited by minority attempts to frustrate its decisions by crying "stinking fish" in public. Such things may pass muster in some dimly lit places; they look all wrong in the atmosphere of a great national social service. They are not the right methods of democratic government, but symptoms of a disease to which democracy is liable. We do not believe for a moment that infection of that kind is a necessary consequence of co-ordination, and we hope that any mischief that has been done will be remedied by the Regions themselves. They might well start by dispelling the absurd suggestion that the presentation of "a minority Report" to the Privy Council can be anything but an objection designed to wreck the Institute's desire to incorporate its co-ordinated Constitution in the form of a Royal Charter.

THE EDITOR.

THE ELDERLY BLIND: WHAT CAN THEY DO?

By A. E. BAWTREE, F.R.P.S.

6. (Conclusion)—Domestic

WHEN my sight first failed a rather meddlesome relative asked my wife, "Do you have to feed him?" This idea of the helplessness which the loss of sight imparts is fairly common. I have had bus conductors try to lift me out like a child, and once a well meaning deacon tried the same thing down the steps of a village church. As a matter of fact, the loss of sight made very little difference to my activities and powers—the foregoing articles are evidence of that—for the loss was mainly in the pleasure of the eye which, of course, I missed greatly.

My first, my immediate need, was for some means of making memoranda. It began with the bottles of acid used for testing the beads, so I made a crude writing device. In the end of a strip of tin I pricked nine holes in a square of three rows of three, and there was a tenth hole beneath them. This could be slid along a strip of brass bearing a row of holes, and a peg through a hole in the tin held it in any position. I wrote the numbers by pricking through the tin on to card, giving the actual number of dots required for each numeral up to 9. The 0 was represented by the bottom dot alone. Then I badly needed to be able to write letters as well as numbers, so I investigated Braille, but found it not only much too difficult but also uncertain. I therefore devised an entirely new alphabet, based upon the same six Braille dots, but an alphabet so simple that in a single day I was able to write and read it fluently.

It has been a matter of amazement to me that the various Institutions for the Blind have rejected the adoption of this system upon what

must be least reasonable of all grounds, namely, that so many books are printed in Braille that any change would be impossible. I took photographs of the first motor journey to Brighton in 1895. Why did not the Automobile Association standardise the form of car then used for all eternity? Wireless reception began with the faint and squeaky headphone, followed by the swan-neck trumpet speaker, the reed and cone, to the moving coil of to-day, and doubtless this will be regarded as crude by posterity. In the realm of writing for the blind, the method has apparently been standardised for all ages and that upon a system which, in my opinion, is crude, difficult and non-elastic.

An additional fault has been the standardisation of the size of the characters, which are too small for people, like myself, with work-hardened finger-tips. I regularly write in characters about half as large again as Braille and my card index of names, addresses and telephone numbers, comprising hundreds of items, is all written on this larger scale.

In the home, I regularly set and clear away meals. I make tea, and I wash up. I claim that I am quicker and have less breakages than sighted people and have demonstrated that my washing up is cleaner! I reckon to wash, dry and put away three articles a minute, including cutlery and plate. Thus the "wash-up" after a dinner for six people may contain 72 pieces and I reckon to do this in 24 minutes. Let the reader compare this with the speed in vogue in his own home. I hardly ever have a breakage; this is mainly because I never use any soap which by making the articles slippery is responsible for most breakages. I use no in-

sanitary mop or dishcloth, but only my fingers, and have often in that way found dirt which other washers-up have failed to remove with the cloth. The only cleanser I use is a little soda for really greasy or fishy things, which, of course, are always left to the end of a wash.

I experience no difficulty in hanging out and taking in washing. I get up coal and coke from the cellar and chop firewood. When desired, I lay and light and maintain fires. I find whether a fire needs making up by feeling gently over the top with the poker, when I can ascertain if there is enough fuel.

In my workrooms I produce a large amount of shavings and sawdust. I keep these rooms in order, doing all my own sweeping.

For warmth, I use mainly an oil stove. This I fill and light myself. Here is a tip for lamp users. Throughout its life the wick should never be cut. It should be wiped with a rag each time the lamp is filled, and it will always burn perfectly. After each wiping the gauze round the burner should be wiped and dusted

with a brush. I tell how full the lamp is when filling it by the pitch of the note produced by blowing across the filling hole.

The various activities which have been described began when I was 62 years of age, but that is now seven years ago. Only one of them has dropped out, namely, that which I described first, lawn mowing, and this is not because I could not do it now, but because the lawn has given place to vegetable beds! Should the grass be replaced in my time, I hope that I may yet have the pleasure of mowing it.

My life is quite a full one. I have sufficient work of interesting variety, and for leisure hours there are Wireless and the Talking Book Library, to which I wish to express a special acknowledgment of gratitude.

If I have written anything to encourage elderly people who, losing their sight, have thought they were of little use, or if I have stimulated blind people to hitherto unsuspected fields of activity, I feel that these little articles will not have been written in vain.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Blind or Sighted Home Visitors?

SIR,—I hope you will allow me to make some observations regarding the correspondence which appeared under the above heading in your July and August issues, and more particularly to refute some of the statements contained in Miss Salisbury's letter. She appears to believe that no blind person is capable of performing adequately the duties which she enumerates as coming within the sphere of the home teaching service, otherwise she surely would not suggest that the "guide" must in fact possess some special qualifications similar or equal to those of the home teacher. The logical conclusion of the latter contention would be to dispense entirely with the home teacher and employ the "guide" to carry out all the necessary work.

Those of us who have been privileged to see the results achieved by blind home teachers view with deep concern and some resentment the increasing tendency to ignore and discredit the contribution they have made and still can make to this service. Since the C.T.B. examination is open to both blind and seeing candidates, the claim of the former to employment cannot be dismissed on the grounds of inefficiency, and indeed no one would wish to see appointments given to blind people who do not possess the necessary ability and qualifications. The same

argument applies equally to those with sight, and it certainly does not appear that *all* the seeing entrants are necessarily the most suitable type for the work involved, especially in so far as the *teaching* functions are concerned. To be able to encourage and inspire the newly-blinded adult by example rather than precept is an invaluable asset which only a blind man or woman can bring to the work. One could give many instances in which the ability to read Braille by touch has provided just that stimulus which is so necessary at the onset of blindness. It would be interesting to know how many seeing teachers can read by touch. Similar arguments could equally well be applied to other aspects of this work, and the psychological effects produced by contact with the right type of blind teacher reserve more consideration than they now deceive.

I think "B.M." fails to realise that the disinclination to employ sightless persons in the service arises from other causes than the possibility of needing a guide. In recent years those responsible for making appointments have tended increasingly to regard the duties involved as being similar to those of a health visitor *plus* investigating officer, though under a properly conducted scheme of social welfare, such duties should not come within the province of the home teacher and visitor to the blind. An enlightened

local authority can and does provide other officers to deal with health, nursing and public assistance.

While it is readily conceded that there are in some rural areas certain difficulties, chiefly associated with transport, which make the appointment of seeing persons desirable, the fact remains that there are ample opportunities in the service for the employment of properly trained and equipped blind people who can make their own especial contribution to the work. The use of Braille notes and a typewriter, a reasonable amount of commonsense and initiative, will enable the non-seeing teacher and visitor adequately to perform the tasks required in this service, as in other professions practised successfully by those who lack sight.

Yours, etc.,

D. CLEAVER,

Hon. General Secretary,

National Association of Blind Workers.

To the Editor.

Reconstruction of Blind Education.

SIR,—I read with great interest the article by Mr. Eagar, in your August issue, on the Reconstruction of Blind Education. His comment on Mr. Roach's letter in the September issue will, I think, find general agreement among the majority of those most closely concerned with the education of our blind girls and boys.

There is, however, one question of "practical politics" which will need to be given a good deal of consideration. This is the question of school fees. Any reorganisation on the lines suggested will, I understand, entail our girls and boys being sent to the school most appropriately planned and equipped for their particular needs. As the numbers of boys and girls of different abilities and capacities fluctuate, this may mean that at one time some schools may be full while others may have many vacancies; at another time the reverse may be true. The vacancies will represent a certain loss of potential fees, and as the schools' overheads are not likely to be affected to the same extent, a position of financial embarrassment may arise.

When the scheme is first introduced I assume it must entail a transfer of a number of pupils from their present school to some other, with a consequent loss of fee by the transferring school. If, say, six pupils are to be transferred for educational purposes, then the income of the school will be reduced by approximately £600, with practically no corresponding saving on overheads. Not many schools to-day, I should imagine, are in the happy position of being able to face such a prospect calmly.

The solution, therefore, as I see it, is that the Central Authority to be set up should be in a position to accept the financial responsibility for all our schools. All fees would go to this body and all expenses be met by it. This would mean that schools need be concerned only with the educational well-being of their pupils; some of whom could be transferred in their best interests without any fear of the education of the remainder being jeopardised by lack of sufficient finance. Furthermore, this could lead to a standardising of all school fees and thus remove the temptation for a Local Authority to send its children to the "cheapest" establishment. Also, since the fees charged do not always cover the total expenditure (in which cases, at present, the balance is made up from the General Charity Funds of the institution), the proposed Central Authority would need money other than the fees on which to draw.

I am not sufficiently informed on financial matters to know if such a body as Mr. Eagar suggests, viz., "a wing" of the Board of Education, would be in a position to do this sort of thing, either with public or private funds, but if the scheme, as I envisage it, is to work at all successfully, some such power must be invested in that body, whether it be an organisation specially set up for the purpose or an organisation already in being.

But would our schools, as at present constituted, with a few municipalised and the majority privately controlled, be prepared to hand over so much of their "sovereign rights"?

Yours, etc.,

Hardwick Hall,

Ellesmere,

Shropshire.

C. M. SPURGEON.

To the Editor.

Fantasy and Fact.

SIR,—At a recent public meeting in Wrexham I was somewhat surprised to hear statements by the Secretary of the Welsh Regional Council for the Blind to the effect that it was this body which was responsible for *making* Sir William Beveridge take evidence on blind welfare; secondly, that this body was also the originator of the placement of blind persons in the war industry; thirdly, that it was to the British Broadcasting Corporation that all the credit was due for the Wireless for the Blind Fund.

As one who has always thought that Sir William Beveridge, far from showing any reluctance to take evidence on blind welfare, invited a statement on this question from a responsible official of the National Institute for

the Blind, I should welcome some clarification of this point. Furthermore, you have previously published statements to the effect that the National Institute for the Blind has, since the very commencement of the war, pursued the matter of the employment of the blind in war industry with the Ministry of Labour. Is it not also generally assumed that the National Institute for the Blind is mainly responsible for the Wireless for the Blind Fund? It would appear, therefore, either that the National Institute for the Blind has been sailing under false colours for some years, or that the statements quoted were intended to discredit the work of the Institute. Can some of your more enlightened correspondents tell me actually which is the case?

Yours, etc.,
"PUZZLED."

["Puzzled" may have misheard the speech in question; if so, we should be most happy to publish a correction. But statements very much to the same effect have to our knowledge been made recently in various parts of Wales, and it seems desirable to meet them with an unprejudiced statement of facts.

Sir William Beveridge would, no doubt, be surprised to hear that he was made to take evidence on Blind Welfare by anyone! Uncajoled, unpersuaded and unforced, he made it known that he desired evidence on Blind Welfare, and, having received sundry partial representations, he asked for a complete statement covering Blind Welfare in England and Wales from the National Institute for the Blind. The statement accordingly furnished by Mr. Eagar was printed in *THE NEW BEACON* of last June.

The history of the campaign for the employment of the blind in war-time has been duly reported in *THE NEW BEACON*. We have no reason to believe that the Welsh Region took action until the N.I.B.'s insistent pressure had produced results. In any case, any question of who originated this, or any other advance in Blind Welfare, is not of material importance. What is of material importance is that all agencies for the blind should work together on any good job of work—whoever starts it.

The statement with regard to the British "Wireless for the Blind Fund," if correctly reported by "Puzzled," is to our own knowledge so perverse that we have asked the Secretary of the Fund to state the facts. Mr. Eagar writes:—

"When I came to the N.I.B. in 1928 I was strongly advised to avoid for a time any new commitments. There was clearly need, however, to discriminate, and among the good ideas already mooted I found the suggestion that the N.I.B., which for several years past had been spending substantial sums on providing wireless sets for necessitous blind persons, should put the provision of wireless for the blind on a stronger basis. The idea had been first mooted by Mr. J. de la Mare Rowley, the Institute's General Editor. He had already discussed it with some officials of the B.B.C., notably the then Editor of *The Radio Times*. Sir Beachcroft Towse backed it warmly, but it had not been before the Institute's Council.

"The proposal as it stood was vague, and, in some details, impracticable—it involved, for example, the setting up of a Central Maintenance Service, which

would have been impossibly expensive. On the other hand, it was obviously rich in possibilities. Sir Beachcroft and I, having agreed a workable plan, made contact with the B.B.C., which we found genial and encouraging. The B.B.C. had been warned, however, that there was something less than complete unity in Blind Welfare, and it insisted that we should secure them against the repercussions of any possible rivalries. The Institute's Council, a comparatively small body in those days, while endorsing the plan put forward, recognised that the B.B.C. had some grounds for its fears, and decided to constitute a separate Fund in which all interests in Blind Welfare would be represented.

"The constitution of the Fund was a foreshadowing of the present scheme of co-ordination, and it may be of historic interest that in this matter St. Dunstan's made its first organic connection with civilian Blind Welfare since it had become a separate organisation. The B.B.C. agreed to appoint in the first instance three representatives to the Fund's Committee; it expressly guarded itself, however, against undertaking any responsibility for the management of the Fund—that must be entirely our concern. Some years later the B.B.C., saying that it was well satisfied with the way things were going, reduced its Committee representation to two. Its officials, without exception, have always been most helpful whenever we had need to ask for their advice or assistance, and its Chief Engineer rendered the Fund a valuable service when he allowed one of his staff, Mr. J. Underdown, to act as its Technical Adviser.

"Although the Fund was constituted under its own Committee and separately registered, the whole of its work, from the start to the present day, has been carried out by the N.I.B. The whole staff of the N.I.B. is used under my direction as required for the benefit of the Fund. We have been responsible for the planning, organising and detailed administration throughout. The weeks following Christmas Day in each year have been almost a nightmare of overtime for many members of our staff, and I am particularly glad to take this opportunity of paying a tribute to their unfailing cheerfulness during that strenuous time and to the deep personal interest they take in the work of the Fund throughout the year. We do not concern ourselves much about credit being given to the N.I.B., but we naturally resent any deliberate attempt to rob us of our due! I am glad to say that the Local Agencies for the Blind which benefit by the work of our Fund—and of our staff—are not slow to express their indebtedness."

Nothing need be added to that except, perhaps, that when members of the ever kindly and generous public attend Annual Meetings of Societies for the Blind they deserve better treatment than to be regaled with politics and personalities.—EDITOR.]

To the Editor.

The National Institute and the Charter.

SIR,—With reference to your article in *THE NEW BEACON* of September 15th entitled "Fundamental Principles," the question that immediately presents itself to the mind of the uninitiated is, what is the underlying reason for the publication of such an article? There is obviously a strong spirit of condemnation of the activities and attitude of the Regional Bodies, which if we infer correctly, must have arisen from a supposition in your mind that the

Regional Associations were in some way or other arraying themselves in opposition against the National Institute for the Blind.

Such a supposition is by its very nature so erroneous that it scarcely calls for contradiction. The National Institute for the Blind is an Institution which all those who are truly and honestly working for the welfare of the blind must wholeheartedly support and approve. However, you yourself refer to the usefulness of honest criticism and surely those best fitted to offer criticism are the members of the National Institute itself, particularly when they are drawn from the wide field of workers in Blind Welfare covered by the Regional Associations, representing as they do the Voluntary Associations and Local Authorities throughout the country responsible under Statute for the care and maintenance of the blind? It would be unnatural to suppose that such persons in the wealth of their experience and devotion to their responsibilities would not wish to see that the new and extended Constitution of the "National Body" was based on the broadest and most democratic and comprehensive lines possible.

Criticism of the Charter Documents arose out of the desire that they should receive the fullest possible scrutiny before being finally submitted to the Privy Council. A sense of urgency appeared to prevail which seemed to preclude a detailed consideration of the documents. Had this haste been less manifest it is doubtful whether any of the misunderstandings or misapprehensions which subsequently arose would ever have materialised. The introduction by the Regional Bodies of their Solicitors and Counsel had an immediate value in that, as you yourself point out, they were able to show how it was possible "to embody the Council's actual scheme of constitution in the Bye-Laws." The Solicitors of the National Institute for the Blind and of the Regional Associations in mutual discussion were able to clear up a variety of minor as well as of vitally important points of difference, so that the action taken by the Regional Bodies after all proved to be extremely helpful.

Concerning the question of the Southern Regional Association's representatives serving upon the National Institute's Council, no unholy pact or new policy has been entered upon by the Southern Regional Association. The resolution referred to in your article merely determined that where national or regional interests were involved representatives could be called together for the purpose of considering what line of action might seem advisable. This, it will be observed, lays no specific obligation on its members, but

pre-supposes that those who are not in general agreement will make their own views clear.

It may be relevant to add that the Committee of representatives of the four Regional Associations has no executive powers at all, but serves as a link between them for the purpose of the interchange of ideas and the pooling of experiences which might serve to bring about improved conditions in Blind Welfare. But any conclusions arrived at are in no way binding upon the several Regional Associations themselves. The calling together of the Inter-Regional Committee, therefore, does not and cannot constitute the creation of "another National Body."

Finally, in reply to the last sentence in your article I would emphasise that the preoccupation of the Southern Regional Association in its work for the welfare of the blind does not permit of any diversion of its energies and activities into the field of politics.

Yours faithfully,

J. A. D. COCHRANE-BARNETT,
Chairman,

Southern Regional Association for the Blind.

[If Captain Cochrane-Barnett thinks that the Charter business was transacted "under a sense of urgency," we wonder what he would regard as a normal time table. Here are facts.

The National Institute's decision to seek fresh Incorporation under Royal Charter in order to put the Constitution agreed with the Joint Blind Welfare Committee into proper form was taken on the 16th June, 1938. On 23rd March, 1939, it constituted a Sub-Committee to consider documents prepared by the Lawyers and gave it power to proceed. On 20th July, 1939, it received the completed drafts, and decided to circulate copies to all members of the Council with a view to finishing the business at the next Meeting. Further action was postponed for the time being owing to the outbreak of War. On 5th December, 1941, however, the Finance Committee, when sanctioning the payment of the heavy legal charges already incurred, recommended to the Council that every effort should be made to complete the business. On 18th December the Council requested the Charter Committee to proceed with final drafts and submit them to the next Meeting of the Council. The Charter Committee decided to consult other Counsel with a view to meeting the views expressed by some members of the Council and to clearing up certain outstanding legal technicalities and, having done so, it presented the revised documents to the Meeting of Council on 30th July, 1942. Representatives of the Regions raised a number of new points, and secured the deferment of the Charter for six months "in order to obtain a unanimous vote for submission of the Charter to the Privy Council." At the same meeting the Council asked the Regional Bodies to formulate all points of objection, and requested the Charter Committee to discuss them with representatives of each Region.

The first attempt to arrange a Meeting for discussion was postponed at the request of the Northern Counties Association for the Blind; the second at the request of the Southern Regional Association for the Blind, which

said that it wished to arrange a Conference of the Regions before the representatives met the Charter Committee. At the same time, the Chairman of the N. C. A. required to know why the Institute wanted a Charter, to which the Charter Committee very naturally replied that that question was settled by the Council unanimously and that it had been appointed to implement that decision, not to discuss the reasons why it was taken. The Meeting was held therefore in *October*, when it was stated that the Executive of the N. C. A. had met and resolved not to support the Petition for Royal Charter and that the Regional representatives had met on the previous day, as a result of which they put forward some observations on the Charter by their Solicitor, who, however, had not been informed that the purpose of the Charter was to put the Co-ordination Constitution into permanent form. It was agreed that the Solicitor employed by the Regions should meet the Institute's Solicitors and that there should then be another Meeting of the Regional Representatives and the Charter Committee. The Solicitors met a fortnight later, but in the following *March* the Regional representatives refused to meet the Charter Committee on the ground that they had not yet received Counsel's Opinion.

At the Meeting of the Institute's Council on the 8th *April*, 1943, Mr. Scorer, in presenting the Charter Committee's report, with the completed documents, moved that the decision be allowed to stand over until the next Meeting in the hope that full agreement would be reached. Capt. Cochrane-Barnett seconded the Motion, saying that the differences which existed were

not of a serious character, and Mr. Kershaw, Chairman of the Northern Counties Association, supported the Motion, which was carried unanimously. Other members of the Council expressed their regret that the business had not been proceeded with after the endless time already spent on it. After that Meeting, there was still further delay on the part of the Regional representatives, but they met the Charter Committee on the 1st *June*, when they expressed appreciation of the way in which their views had been met and agreed that the two points on which agreement had not been reached were matters which only Group E (National Members) and the Council itself could decide.

None the less, when the Council met on *July 29th*, it found that the Regional representatives had held another Meeting on the previous day and desired to make further amendments and when, after a prolonged discussion, the Resolution to proceed with the Charter had been carried, the Chairman of the N. C. A. announced that his Association would oppose the Charter before the Privy Council.

On *August 19th* a Meeting of the Executive of the Southern Region was held, when it was decided to submit "a minority report" to the Privy Council and to inform other Regional bodies of that decision.

That simple statement of the sequence of facts is the kindest answer, not only to the suggestion that the Charter was rushed through in a way which created misunderstanding and misapprehensions," but to the rest of Captain Cochrane-Barnett's letter. Further comment is made in the Editorial article.]

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Royal Normal College R.S.A. Successes.—
The following Royal Society of Arts examination successes are announced. (G.S. denotes Gardner Scholar) :—

English (Advanced) :

David R. Johnston (G.S.) 2nd Class.
Kenneth Wycherley (G.S.) „

Economic Theory :

Evelyn Hardiman 1st Class.

Shorthand (Advanced), 120 words per minute :

David R. Johnston (G.S.)
Betty Jell (G.S.)
William L. Klippel
Kathleen Mulcaster (G.S.)

Shorthand (Intermediate), 100 words per minute :

Ronald Fielding (G.S.)
David R. Johnston (G.S.)
William L. Klippel
John C. Plummer (G.S.)
Ronald Tarrant (G.S.)

80 words per minute :

Angela M. Dimbleby (G.S.)
Joan Fielding (G.S.)
Aubrey Matthews (G.S.)
Anna Weisz

Typewriting (Advanced) :

Georgina Bright (G.S.) 1st Class.
Ronald Fielding (G.S.) „
Betty Jell (G.S.) „
David R. Johnston (G.S.) „

William L. Klippel 1st Class.
Kathleen Mulcaster (G.S.) „
Margaret Perrett (G.S.) „
John C. Plummer (G.S.) 2nd Class.

Shorthand-Typist's Certificate :

Georgina Bright (G.S.)
Betty Jell (G.S.)
David R. Johnston (G.S.)
William L. Klippel
Kathleen Mulcaster (G.S.)
Margaret Perrett (G.S.)

Typewriting (Elementary) :

Angela M. Dimbleby (G.S.) Credit.
Joan Fielding (G.S.) „
Norman A. Green (G.S.) „
Evelyn Hardiman „
Beatrice Lodge (G.S.) „
Ronald Maskell „
Aubrey Matthews (G.S.) „
Colin Wells (G.S.) „
Kenneth Wycherley (G.S.) „

Birmingham Musical Successes.—The following 15 students of the Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind obtained their certificates for pianoforte playing from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music at the Midsummer Examinations :—

Grade 6, Elsie Oles ; Grade 4, Christopher Michell, James Hughes, John Wells ; Grade 3, Fred Jakeman, Sylvia Hughes ; Grade 2,

Margaret Page; Grade 1, William Nixon (Credit), Gordon Stephens (Credit), Leslie Day (Credit), Allan Dobson (Credit), Ronald Gordon (Credit), Michael Haig, Clarence Brown, Barbara Share.

Worcester School Certificate Results.—School Certificates have been gained by the following pupils at Worcester College for the Blind:—

John Barton, Mark Freedman, Norman Green, Desmond Hodges, Lewis Jones, John Popplewell, Aubrey Rhodes, David Taylor, Roy Wisbey.

A Higher Certificate has been gained by Richard Sants.

Wonderful Work by Paralysed Blind Knitter.—Admiration for the achievements of Miss M. E. Ollier, of Stacksteads, who, in spite of blindness and paralysis, has been knitting comforts since the outbreak of war, has been expressed in many quarters. The latest to pay tribute to her work is Lord Ebbisham, chairman of the Red Cross and St. John War organisation. Expressing thanks for a knitted blanket, which he describes as one of the most charming gifts they have ever received at that department, Lord Ebbisham says it has been greatly admired, and he feels it is a wonderful piece of work for anyone to have done, and especially one handicapped as is Miss Ollier. So far she has knitted some fifty blankets for the Navy, military hospitals, and the Red Cross, and over 280 woollen scarves and chest protectors.

PERSONALIA

MR. J. J. HOWLETT, on his retirement on superannuation from his post as Chief Investigator in East Ham Borough Treasurer's Department, has asked to be relieved of the hon. secretaryship of the East Ham Welfare Association for the Blind. To mark their appreciation of his services on their behalf the blind people have given him a clock. Mr. Howlett will continue on the Association's Committee and retain the office of Hon. Treasurer. MRS. H. HAWKES has accepted the position of Hon. Secretary, with MRS. J. WELDON as Hon. Assistant Secretary.

* * *

MISS MARY G. THOMAS and the REV. F. H. ROACH have resigned from the Executive Council of the Southern Regional Association for the Blind.

SONNET TO BLINDNESS

PITY me not in my perpetual gloom
This dungeon darkness holding me
enchained

A prisoned soul, nor be thou deeply
pained

That these once eager eyes are sealed in doom.
For, inly, I am like a lighted room,
Where merry minstrelsy sings unrestrained,
But where sweet Poesy herself hath deigned
To come with lyric flowers of gayest bloom.
My sky is jewelled o'er with silver stars
Of Hope and Fancy, scintillating bright,
While Patience, like a nun behind her bars
Or like the magic moon, lends lovelier light.
Why grieve then? for the day and night are one
To Him who is our soul's unsetting Sun.

HAMISH DALL.

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home.

Sir Beachcroft Towse Ex-Service Fund.—During the past year this Fund has dealt with 633 cases, at least half of which were referred by the British Legion. It works in close co-operation with local agencies for the blind, and always acts with their knowledge in giving help. Blind dependants of ex-Service men are helped to secure secondary education or professional training, those who are in danger of losing their sight are assisted to secure medical advice, apparatus in the form of typewriters, Braille frames and Braille watches is given, blind ex-Servicemen of good character and long service may be granted pensions. In all its activities the Fund seeks to give just that "little more" to supplement existing benefits which often means so much to those eligible for the Fund who are not only blind but old or elderly or in enfeebled health.

Lindsey Blind Society.—This Society includes a novel feature in its Report, in a detailed table of the causes of blindness in the 435 persons on its Register.

Collections in the county have increased by nearly a thousand pounds, having risen from

£1,650 to over £2,570, and although the abnormal conditions of wartime are no doubt partly responsible, so large an increase reflects great credit on the collecting agency. The Report refers appreciatively to the work of the collecting staff of the National Institute for the Blind.

A CORRECTION.—In our last issue, in the review of the Report of the Birmingham Institution, the sentence beginning "Seventeen of the Royal Normal College pupils..." should read: "Seventeen of the Royal Normal College pupils for whom temporary wartime accommodation was provided are to remain at the Birmingham Institution. This is in accordance with the new scheme sponsored by the Board of Education, whereby the College becomes a senior selective school specialising in the teaching of music, pianoforte tuning, shorthand and typing." It is of course the Royal Normal College, and not the Birmingham Institution, that thus becomes a senior selective school.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music are *net* but represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances :		s.	d.
19050	D'Artega. In the Blue of Evening, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19051	Lawnhurst, V. Johnny Zero, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19052	Manners, H. Keep an Eye on Your Heart, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19053	Styne, J., and Cahn, S. I've Heard That Song Before, Song Fox-Trot	0	6

BRAILLE BOOKS.

The prices represent the actual cost of production. Blind residents in any part of the British Empire are charged one-third of the quoted price.

All books and pamphlets are Standard English Braille, large size, interpointed, paper covers, unless otherwise stated.

Autobiography :

18690-2.	Memory-Hold-the-Door. By John Buchan. 3 vols. 7s. 9d. per vol. F234.
18726-8.	Midnight on the Desert. By J. B. Priestley. 3 vols. 6s. per vol. F179.

Fiction :

18155-8.	Death at the Bar. By Ngaio Marsh. 4 vols. 5s. 9d. per vol. F226.
18221-3.	Bermuda Burial. By C. Daly King. 3 vols. 6s. 3d. per vol. F186.
18224-9.	The Spanish Bride. By Georgette Heyer. 6 vols. 6s. 3d. per vol. F361.

Games :

19100.	Games of Patience Adapted for Blind Players. Pamphlet. No cover. 6d. E8.
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History :

18599-603.	Into Battle: Speeches by the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill, C.H., M.P. Compiled by Randolph S. Churchill, M.P. 5 vols. 6s. 3d. per vol. F309.
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Poetry :

19073.	Wounded Thammuz. By John Heath- Stubbs. Pocket size. 1 vol. 1s. 6d. F15.
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Forthcoming Pandas.

No. 72.	The Ship. By C. S. Forester. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.
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An admirably plain and methodical story of how a light cruiser, H.M.S. *Artemis*, fared in an engagement in the Mediterranean when taking part in conducting a convoy from Alexandria to Malta with urgent supplies. The narrative has a fine strength and pictorial intensity.

No. 73.	Combined Operations, 1940-1942. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.
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A full account of the thrilling adventures of the Commandos, and other Special Service Forces of the United Nations, during the first year of their operations, including the "Battle of the Fjords," the assault from the sea on St. Nazaire, the storming of Diego Suarez, and the famous Dieppe "Reconnaissance in Force," etc.

MOON BOOKS.

4670-4675.	One's Company. By P. Fleming. 6 vols.
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ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

Additions for October, 1943.

Theology :		Vols.
D'Arcy, M. C.	Death and Life	3
Easton, B. S.	The Gospel before the Gospels	2
Lake, K.	The Earlier Epistles of St. Paul	7
Powys, L.	The Pathetic Fallacy: A Study of Christianity	2
Social and Political :		
Barker, E.	Reflections on Government	9
Economics :		
Birnie, A.	Economic History of Europe, 1760- 1930	5
Law :		
1940	Cambridge Law School. Outline of Mr. Hollond's Lectures on Property (B). (Choses in possession and choses in action)	2
Phillips, E. A.	Probate and Estate Duty Prac- tice. Third Edition, 1932	6
Winfield, P. H.	Syllabus of Lectures on the Law of Torts	1
English Literature :		
Mackail, W. H.	The Springs on Helicon: Study in English Poetry from Chaucer to Milton	2
Skeat, W. W.	Specimens of English Literature, 1394-1579	10
Poetry :		
MacNeice, L.	Autumn Journal, and Thomas, D. Twenty-five Poems	1
Muir, E.	The Narrow Place, and Monro, H. The Silent Pool and other Poems	1

Essays :	Vols.
Mortimer, R. Channel Packet	4
French :	
Mornet, D. Histoire de la littérature et de la pensée françaises	5
German :	
Gaupp, W. Stürmische Fahrt	1
Mattheus, P. Rümel als Detektiv	1
Russon, L. J. Spass Muss Sein	1
Willoughby, L. A. The Classical Age of German Literature, 1748-1805	2
Classics :	
Sidgwick, A. Introduction to Greek Prose Composition	6
Hebrew :	
Ezra and Nehemiah	1
I Chronicles	1

II Chronicles	1
Biography :	
Hyde, H. M. Princess Lieven	4
Travel :	
Cable, M., and French, F. The Gobi Desert	6
MANUSCRIPT MUSIC LIBRARY.	
Piano :	
Addinsell, R. Warsaw Concerto (Solo arr. H. Geehl) (613).	
Dvořák. Poëtische Stimmungsbilder, Book 1, Op. 85 (614).	
Mozart. Sonata No. 2 in F, K.280 (615).	
Mozart. Sonata No. 20 in C minor, K.Supp.284a (616).	
Clarinet and Piano :	
Weber. Concerto in E flat, Op. 48 (Piano Part only) (617).	

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES : 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

POST WANTED. Matron in Blind Home, experienced. References. Write M. S., c/o THE NEW BEACON, 224, Great Portland Street, W.1.

LONDON STUDY GROUP.

The next meeting of the London Study Group will be held on the 6th November, at 3.15 p.m., National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1. Applications for membership are cordially invited.—ERIC LEARY (Chairman).

N.I.B. NEEDS TYPEWRITERS.

If any friends of the blind have typewriters for sale, could the National Institute for the Blind have first chance? Standards or portables. Standard makes. In good working condition. Address: Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

KNITTING DEPARTMENT SUPERVISOR (FEMALE) REQUIRED. Must be experienced in round and flat machine, with ability to cut out and complete garments. With full knowledge of modern electric overlocking machine. Department has nine girls. Salary £182, plus £26 per annum War Bonus. Applications, stating age, experience, with testimonials, and any other particulars, should be sent to: Alfred E. Ledger, Esq., Superintendent and Secretary, Warrington and Widnes Blind Society, 4, Museum Street, Warrington.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF MERTHYR TYDFIL.

Applications are invited from persons not over 45 years of age, for the appointment of a Male Certified Home Teacher and Visitor of the Blind at a salary of £180 per annum, plus war bonus.

The appointment will be subject to the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, and the successful applicant will be required to pass a medical examination. Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by copies of two recent testimonials, must be delivered to the undersigned not later than the 23rd October, 1943.

EDWARD ROBERTS, Town Clerk.

Town Hall,
Merthyr Tydfil, Glam.

SIGHTED FEMALE HOME TEACHER for town area. State age and experience. Salary according to qualifications. Apply Secretary, South Beds. Blind Centre, Williamson Street, Luton.

HOME TEACHERS EXAMINATION, 1944. Candidates anxious to obtain guidance and qualified instruction to assist them in gaining the Diploma are invited to apply for particulars of a Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

ROYAL MIDLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

Applications are invited for the position of sighted Home Teacher in Nottingham at a commencing salary of £180 per annum, plus War Bonus, rising to £210. Particulars of experience and qualifications, together with copies of testimonials, should be sent to the undersigned not later than 30th October, 1943.

A. C. V. THOMAS,

Superintendent and Secretary.

30, Chaucer Street,
Nottingham.

NORTHERN COUNTIES ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND.

TRAINING COURSE FOR PROSPECTIVE HOME TEACHERS.

The Annual Training Course will be held commencing about the beginning of March, 1944, and occupying a period of six weeks. Approval of the Association must be obtained before admittance to the Course. Normally, candidates must be not less than twenty-one or more than forty years of age on the date of the 1944 Examination which they must undertake to sit, but, for the period of the war, applications from persons otherwise suitable but over forty years of age will be considered. Subsistence grants and travelling expenses will be paid on behalf of approved candidates residing within the Association's area.

Details and forms of application may be obtained from the Secretary, Northern Counties Association for the Blind, 17, Blenheim Terrace, Leeds, 2.

The New **BEACON**

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 323.

NOVEMBER 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.
Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.)

THE BLIND IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

By W. H. JONES

COMPARISONS have often been made between town life and country life, and we may be sure that the last word on the subject will not have been said for a long time to come. When this question is considered from the point of view of the blind, the nature of their handicap must be carefully borne in mind.

It is worth noting that organised effort on behalf of the blind in Great Britain began with the growth of large towns during the industrial revolution. Of the social life of the blind before this time we know very little, but we may take it for granted that their numbers were small—probably much smaller in proportion to the general population than at present. Apart from gifted individuals here and there, the town blind must have been in very great distress, with begging as almost the only means by which they could keep themselves alive. Conditions in the country, however, may well have been easier. A blind person would not have so much need to parade his affliction, as he would be well known to his neighbours, who would therefore be all the more willing to relieve his wants as best they could. Moreover, there would be greater opportunity than in the towns for doing certain light but useful tasks, which would enable a blind person to feel that he was repaying the community in some measure for the benefits that he received.

With the rapid increase in population and the springing up of large towns almost overnight, the condition of the blind must for some time have been much worse. Their own numbers would increase considerably, and as most of the people among whom they lived were themselves very poor, begging would become almost as unprofitable as it was degrading. Fortunately, there were here and there high-minded individuals who realised that by education and other means this deplorable state of affairs could be remedied, and the fact that the blind were concentrated in comparatively small areas made welfare work among them much easier. In time some of the benefits enjoyed by the town blind, such as education, became available to those in the country also.

If we compare conditions in town and country now, we find that in the matter of welfare work the town has maintained its lead. In many places clubs have been established, where the blind may pass a pleasant evening when the day's work is done. Facilities for reading or playing games are provided, new friendships can be formed and old ones strengthened, and topics of general or particular

interest can be discussed at leisure. The countryman, on the other hand, is cut off from his friends, and cannot keep in touch with them except by letter. If he loves reading, he finds his choice of books considerably restricted. He may have one volume every week from the local Society for the Blind, but if he is a quick reader he will have finished it within a few hours. It is true that he can extend his reading by borrowing books from the National Library, but if his income is small he will have to be very careful in this matter, as he will have to meet the cost himself, instead of having it defrayed by the Society or Local Authority, as is done in some towns. In the matter of employment, conditions are much better in the town than in the country, as the Workshop Employee earns more than the Home Worker, and as the kind of war work that the blind can do is generally located in the towns, it is easier for the townsman to get it than for the countryman. Moreover, the Labour Exchange official in the town is as a rule more enterprising than his colleague in the country.

It will be agreed, then, that from the point of view of organised welfare work the townsman is much better off than the countryman, but the happiness of each one of us depends not only on what others do for us, but also on what we can do for ourselves, and on the way we accept our limitations. The countryman who loves music and the drama is in the nature of things denied the townsman's facilities for going regularly to a concert or theatre; but at least he has his wireless set, which provides him with all kinds of entertainment at small expense. Whenever he has a chance of hearing a real live performance of his favourite works, his enjoyment of it will probably be all the greater because of the sacrifices that he will have had to make.

From the point of view of health, the countryman enjoys a very great advantage. He can take long walks in the fresh air, without having his mind continually occupied with the problem of avoiding the traffic on the road. As walking through crowded streets is a rather hazardous enterprise for even the boldest blind townsman, and as his place of work may be a considerable distance from his home, he must make use of some public conveyance, which, though bringing his journey to a speedy end, has the disadvantage that it may often be full to capacity, and it will always be hard to avoid catching a cold from coughing and sneezing fellow-passengers. It is unfortunate for the townsman that he cannot often experience the very great pleasure that a long country walk can give. There are, of course,

many other ways in which he can exercise himself, and if he works in the garden or swims he will certainly be well up to standard, but these and other forms of exercise are within reach of the countryman also, who in this respect is therefore much better off on balance.

Earlier in this article it was suggested that before there was any organised effort on behalf of the blind, conditions in the country may well have been easier than in the town, as a blind person would be well known to all his neighbours, and would therefore have less need to remind them continually of his affliction. Nowadays this friendliness which distinguishes the country from the town expresses itself in a different way. With the advances that have been made in education, a blind person can take a more active part in the life of the community, and thus enable his seeing friends to realise that in spite of his blindness he is not fundamentally different from themselves. He in his turn comes to regard the postman or shopkeeper as a real human being with whom any and every subject may be discussed, and not as a mere machine that delivers his letters or groceries. The war has brought something of this neighbourly spirit into the towns, and there can be no doubt that blind persons who have obtained employment in ordinary factories derive much profit from being brought into close contact with people whom they have never met before. But will this continue after the war, or will the old condition of things return? Whatever happens about employment after the war, let us hope that the town blind will always receive from those with whom they come in contact that friendliness which has been brought to the surface by the perils of war, and which, as has been pointed out, is so characteristic of the country.

Having compared some aspects of the life of the blind in town and country, let us consider what improvements can be made in welfare work on their behalf. As it is desirable that the town blind should be as healthy as possible, societies should arrange frequent trips to the country. Young and active members would thus be able to take long walks, while older ones who might prefer some more sedentary way of passing the time would at least have the benefit of a change of scene. Intercourse with neighbouring societies should be constantly maintained by such means as sports contests and dances, and concerts and amateur theatricals should also be encouraged. It is quite true that much work of this kind has been done in the past, but still more must be done in the future if the blind are to enjoy a full social life. Little progress can be expected

until the war is over, but there is no reason why thereafter some function on the lines suggested should not be arranged at least once a week. In most of these activities seeing friends could also take part, and thus benefit themselves as well as the blind.

It must be admitted that welfare work in the country presents greater difficulties, as the blind are few in number and are scattered over a wide area; but this does not mean that no improvements can be made in present conditions. The isolation imposed by geography would to some extent be countered if the local Society arranged meetings at some town within easy reach of all the blind in the area. These gatherings should be held once a month—or at least once a quarter. There should be nothing formal or institutional about these occasions, but everything should be done in the friendliest spirit, so that the blind would feel that they were really being made welcome. Whenever possible the arrangements should be in the hands of some blind person on the spot. If every kind of social activity were encouraged, the blind would always have something to look forward to. Where a Society undertakes welfare work in an area comprising several counties, it might well happen that reunions of the blind of the whole area could not be arranged. In such cases meetings might have to be restricted to the blind of a particular county, but every effort should be made to enlarge the scope of such meetings, so that intercourse between as many as possible of the blind of the area might be promoted. In cases of hardship the cost of transport should be borne by the Society.

As reading is one of the greatest pleasures that the blind can enjoy, a plentiful supply of books should always be maintained. It has already been mentioned that the Society usually sends one volume every week, but as most books are in several volumes, a long time passes before a complete work is read. No book can be fully enjoyed unless it can be continued at will. What would be the feelings of an ordinary reader who uses the public library if he were to find that a book of, say, 400 pages had been divided into five parts of 80 pages each, and he were allowed only one part every week? He would probably prefer to have the five parts, and bring them back at the end of five weeks. As there are very many books in the National Library, Societies should borrow enough of them to be able to send complete works to all blind persons who prefer them. Another plan would be to follow the example of some town authorities by helping to meet the cost incurred by those who would prefer to borrow books

direct from the National Library. More books and magazines should also be bought from the National Institute and other printing houses. In this way the country blind would enjoy an excellent service, each one having the kind of reading that he liked best.

These are some of the improvements that should be made in the social welfare of the blind in town and country. Their economic advancement should be promoted in every possible way, especially by endeavouring to maintain and increase employment in sighted industry after the war. The attention of employers and Trade Union leaders should be drawn to the great success achieved by Henry Ford in providing useful and remunerative work for the blind. If as a result of such representations appropriate action were taken, blind workers should show their appreciation by becoming active Trade Unionists, and doing all in their power to promote good relations between their colleagues and employers. If all capable blind persons are gainfully employed, those who cannot support themselves will then be able to receive more generous provision than in the past, both in town and country.

PERSONALIA

MISS PHYLLIS RHODES, Home Teacher of the Blind in Rochdale, who is leaving to take another appointment at Bridgnorth, Shropshire, was presented last month by members of her handicrafts class with a tea-service.

* * *

A cheque was presented last month to MR. G. O'NEIL, Secretary and Manager of St. Helens and District Society for the Welfare of the Blind, who has taken up a similar post in Wigan. The Mayor of St. Helens, President of the Society, congratulated Mr. O'Neil on the splendid work he had achieved during his ten years' term of office.

* * *

MR. T. ROBERTS, Stoke-on-Trent, has been appointed Secretary of the St. Helens and District Society.

* * *

Last month MR. ALBERT TYLER, of Leicester, celebrated his 80th birthday. He maintains his keen interest in many Leicester philanthropic institutions, notably the Royal Leicester Institution for the Blind, with which he has been closely associated for over 30 years, acting as Chairman for 20 years.

HOME NEWS

National Library Extension.—An appeal for £1,000 is being made for an extension of the Northern Branch of the National Library for the Blind. The site of the extension is in Deansgate, Manchester.

Willows for Wigan.—The Blackwood District Council has agreed to an application from the Wigan, Leigh and District Society for the Blind to lease about six acres of land from the Council for the purpose of willow growing.

Two Heroic Servers of the Blind.—Lord Normanby has been invited to join the Executive Council of St. Dunstan's in recognition of his work for blind British prisoners of war in Germany. He accepted the invitation when he brought 23 of the repatriated prisoners, who recently arrived in the country, to St. Dunstan's. Lord Normanby's great work of mercy began a few days after he arrived at Stalag 90, in Thuringia. Limping about the camp still in great pain from a leg wound he received in battle near Dunkirk whilst serving as a second-lieutenant with the Green Howards, he noticed several blind British soldiers, and made up his mind to devote his time to them. There were only a handful of blinded soldiers in that camp, but, following negotiations, all the British prisoners known to have lost their sight were soon under his care. He speaks highly of St. Dunstan's, the Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A., and says that without their help he could not have created a Braille school in Germany. Before proper apparatus arrived they had to improvise the teaching of Braille with a cardboard box and glass-headed pins.

Repatriated prisoners also paid sterling tribute to the work of Major David Livingstone Charters, the Merseyside eye specialist, among eye affected compatriots in the camp. He did not accept the opportunity to be repatriated as he felt he still had work to do there. A number of airmen come to him with burned eyelids and he is doing valuable plastic surgery. The morale of the blinded men, he says, is amazing, and it is they who cheer him up. He is 42, a Glasgow man, educated at Glasgow University. For a number of years he practised privately as an ophthalmic surgeon. The Germans have granted him facilities to continue his work since he has a gift to restore sight in some of the most hopeless cases.

A Lifelong Friend to Hull's Blind.—At a recent meeting of the Board of Management of the Hull and East Riding Institute for the

Blind a letter was read from a subscriber to the effect that she was "thankful to have had the pleasure and privilege of subscribing to the Institute since its formation in 1864."

The subscriber is a Miss Lunn, sister of the late Dr. Rockliffe, who did so much good work for the blind of Hull and district. Dr. Rockliffe changed his name from Lunn to comply with a clause in a will.

Blind Player Vice-President of New Chess Education Society.—Mr. T. H. Tylor, the well-known blind chess player and Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, has been invited to be Vice-President of a new body named the Chess Education Society, of which the object will be to work for the establishment of chess within the educational system. Mr. R. A. Butler, President of the Board of Education, has been invited to be President of the Society. The members do not desire the introduction of chess as a compulsory subject of the Secondary School but amongst the optional subjects indicated in the White Paper on Educational Reconstruction in the Young People's College, the Adult School, and the Modern School.

Blind Man's Tribute to Lindsey Blind Society.—Mr. A. E. Wilson, the totally blind Assistant Hon. Secretary of Lindsey Blind Society, concluded his review of the work of the Society at its annual meeting, by saying that fifteen years ago he had lost his sight and the outlook had seemed very black and hopeless in the extreme. Thanks to the Society, however, the position was now quite the reverse. He was very happy and contented in his work and life seemed now very well worth living. This applied to all the workers in the county and on their behalf he expressed congratulations and grateful thanks on the Society's 21st Birthday.

EMPIRE NEWS

A St. Dunstan's for Australia.—At a dinner given in Melbourne to Sir Neville Pearson by the Blinded Soldiers' Association, it was announced that it had been decided to establish in Australia an institute similar to St. Dunstan's, and that the Lord Mayor of Melbourne would appeal early next year for £A20,000 for it.

FOREIGN NEWS

German Blind Students.—Sixty-five per cent. of the students who have passed through the German Institute for the Blind at Marburg are now studying law and political science and 10 per cent. theology or languages.

REPLANNING SCHOOLS FOR THE BLIND

THE "Report of the Sub-Committee on Replanning" is, as the prefatory note declares, "the pronouncement" of the College of Teachers on the overhaul and improvement of the existing machinery for the education and training of blind pupils. Though published after the White Paper it was written before it. It has to be considered, therefore, as an independent evaluation of the difficulties of the present system, rather than as a set of proposals designed to give blind children the full benefits of the new education policy.

None the less, it is a valuable document for the present times. It puts a sure finger on some radical defects. It not only declares that blind children need fewer and larger schools, but also states which of the existing schools should be preserved. Boldness is its *forte*. It tackles the complex of questions involved in the definition of blindness. It proposes that the whole system of education for blind children should be supervised by an Advisory or Consultative Committee under the aegis of the Board of Education, composed of a representative from each school, member of the governing body or official, plus three representatives of the College of Teachers, one of the National Union of Teachers and one of the Association of Directors of Education. It calls for compulsory notification of infantile blindness and better qualified and better paid teaching staffs. It recognises the value of the Sunshine Homes as Nursery Schools for blind children and the need for at least one other Court Grange for retarded blind children, and it "welcomes the experiment" of the Board of Education's Scheme of "setting up the Royal Normal College as a Senior Selective School." The authors of the Report would not expect their conclusions to be accepted as final, but it is a real advantage to sound thinking and progressive action that the considered views of men and women who have given their lives to the special task of teaching blind children should, at this stage, be clearly defined. A professional viewpoint is often restricted, but, in the framing of a practical policy, it can never be ignored.

Recent articles in THE NEW BEACON have emphasised the view that there can be no effective reconstruction of the system of schools for the blind without a measure of central

direction and control. The large representative "Advisory or Consultative Committee" proposed by the College would have no power to do anything. It would advise the Board of Education, whose powers in relation to the schools for the blind would remain unchanged. It might, the Report suggests, "bring a good deal of pressure to bear on the Board," But a Committee, on which every interest in the existing system of schools for the blind is equally represented and on which no wider educational interests have a voice, is not likely to be far-seeing or wide in its views even if it ever achieved anything like unanimity. Consultative and Advisory Committees have their place in the scheme of things, but that place is to keep things quiet and reconcile conflicting views rather than to carry through a fundamental reform. Unless schools for the blind share fully in the White Paper reconstruction or recasting of the whole educational system, blind children will fall even further behind their sighted coevals.

The weakness of an Advisory Committee at the Board springs to the eye against the positive proposals made for the re-ordering of the existing schools. "The elementary education of the blind" (the Sub-Committee did not anticipate the White Paper abandonment of the term "elementary") would be provided by Residential Schools at Newcastle, Liverpool (Wavertree), Liverpool (Roman Catholic), Manchester (Henshaw's), Birmingham, Gorleston, Bristol, and Bridgend; together with some unspecified Yorkshire centre and some—also at present undefined—place near London where a new Swiss Cottage would be erected. The needs of partially sighted children would be met by two schools at Brighton, at Exeter and at Preston. It is argued that all this rearrangement would be a practicable proposition, "given friendly compulsion and goodwill."

That possibly underestimates the strength of old traditions, local tenacity and established interests. It is at least possible that the imposition of a comprehensive plan, produced, after adequate consideration and consultation, by a central body with authority to subordinate every interest to that of the children themselves, would be not only more satisfactory but more popular. Nothing would breed more discontent and ill-feeling than a long-drawn inquest conducted by an oversize jury, every member of

which would feel that he might be the next corpse.

The Report is undoubtedly right in declaring that the future school for the blind should be large enough to carry the most highly qualified staff and to secure the efficient grading of its pupils; that the schools should secure men and women who have been professionally prepared for their work; that the staffing scale should be generous; that children at any "elementary" school who show special promise should receive the advantages of secondary or advanced education; and that those schools should also make greater efforts to transfer to the schools for retarded children those of their pupils who are gravely below the average. But how would a fully representative, purely advisory or merely consultative committee secure the paradoxical degree of uniformity which must be secured, if children of varying attainments at different schools are to have equal opportunity of diverse treatment? There has been a movement of ideas since the College's Report was published, and the College might well consider whether the Central Board for the Education of the Blind proposal is not the only effective means of developing its major proposals.

At some points, the Report goes rather wide of its mark. The recommendations with regard to the definition of blindness do not follow from the arguments used to justify them. Their acceptance would create fresh anomalies and add to the blind a number of people whom the community at large would not recognise as being blind.

The recognition of the Sunshine Homes as an integral part of the national scheme for blind education will no doubt be gratifying to the National Institute for the Blind whose enterprise in this direction has not previously been appreciated by the College; but the emphatic condemnation of the policy of retaining children in Sunshine Homes to the age of seven, and in some cases to the age of nine, is a bad case of attempting to make the child fit the educational machinery rather than to adapt the machine to the requirements of each child. The National Institute's present policy, of considering the suitability of each child for transfer on reaching the age of five and advising the responsible Local Educational Authorities, was formed only after years of observation and experiment.

There is some discrepancy between the language of the text and the language of the Resolution in question, and it might be suggested to the College that its Resolution would be improved by changing the word "possible" in its last line to "advisable."

The recommendations on the location of

schools, "in open country on the verge of great cities," show careful consideration of a problem which requires just that kind of consideration. It would be interesting to know, however, how far the existing schools which are close to great cities, or in them, make use of facilities, "theatres and concerts . . . educational visits to museums, galleries and other places of urban intellectual life" within their reach.

The most highly debatable passage is on page 14 of the Report where, having found that retarded children should be transferred to Court Grange, the Report goes on to argue for the establishment of occupational colonies probably on a Regional basis, prefacing this recommendation with the phrase "For obvious social reasons it is desirable that the majority of these cases should be segregated from the ordinary life of the community." The amount of question-begging involved in that phrase may be simply indicated by suggesting as an alternative sentence "For obvious personal reasons, it is desirable that the majority of these cases should not be segregated from the ordinary life of the community."

The weakest parts of the Report are in fact those where the teachers have gone outside their own sphere. The advocacy of occupational colonies for the product of schools for retarded or mentally deficient blind children is an inversion of the right approach for such a body as the College of Teachers. It, above all organisations, should have emphasised the value of giving retarded and mentally deficient blind children the best possible training and education, even though they may be unemployable for the rest of their lives. Such education is a right thing in itself; on the other hand, occupational colonies for unoccupiable persons are a proposition requiring scrupulous examination, and there is a danger in taking it for granted that the first duty of the community to specially handicapped people is to take them out of their own domestic and social environment. Similarly the advocacy of compulsory notification of infantile blindness is not to be lightly undertaken. It involves questions of the awareness of parents of degree of defect which only a medical man can decide, and the imposition of sanctions for failure to comply.

The strength of the Report lies in its courage in facing problems of which its authors have first-hand knowledge. Now, when Parliament is girding up its loins for educational revolution, is the time to tackle our antiquated, inconvenient and inefficient system of schools for the blind with courage—and vision.

E.

THE PROBLEM OF WALKING ALONE

By L. FUCHS, Ph.D.

I HAVE been re-reading with great interest the third article of the series "A Terrible Affliction," entitled "On the Road," by Mr. W. H. Coates, in the March issue of THE NEW BEACON.

Since I have had the chance of making some strange experiments which have thrown some light on the question "How do the blind walk alone in the road?" I have formed an opinion on this matter which differs somewhat from that to which Tom came in the course of his experiments.

I hold the opinion that both the sense of hearing and what, by mistake, is called "the blind man's eye," help the blind person to find his way about, to steer his course and to avoid obstructions.

By "the blind man's eye" I understand the sensation of pressure on the bare skin of head and face which one feels when approaching a solid object and which in itself has nothing to do with hearing. At least, that is the conclusion to which I have come through the experiments which I have mentioned. It has nothing to do with blindness and is not confined to the blind but has been experienced by nearly everybody who is familiar with walking a great deal in the open country at night time. The impression of solidity "which was as vivid as though he had touched the objects with his hands" is caused when the bare skin of the moving blind man's body is struck by waves of air which are caused by the moving body itself and which are thrown back towards it by a solid object. Thus their quality almost equals a tactual sensation. Those sensations which have been established in experiments with animals (bats) and which are still highly developed among some natives, the senses of whom have not yet been blunted by civilisation, exist quite independently from the sense of hearing, and have nothing to do with the ear.

It is of the greatest importance, when trying to understand the problem that Mr. Coates has set us, the use which the specialised ear of the blind makes of the relationship between the sound and its echo. It is correct that "the relationship between the original sound and its echo is picked up and conveyed to the auditory apparatus" and the specialised ear learns to judge from what kind of object the particular relation may originate. The consciousness, however, reached eventually as a

sensation of substance and solidity, is to my experience definitely due to sensations of pressure on the bare skin.

I had among my pupils quite a number who in addition to being blind had very poor hearing. I watched them closely and found that some of them stopped invariably in front of an unexpected obstruction.

A highly intelligent blind friend of mine became for about six weeks nearly totally deaf as a consequence of an inflammation of both his ears. He continued to walk about by himself. He observed himself as closely as he possibly could and told me about his observations. He most certainly found the lack of hearing a tremendous handicap, but he still got the sensation of solidity in front of an obstruction and a fair impression of the distance he held from a wall, fence, etc.

We invited Dozent Dr. W. Stein, the ear specialist who had attended to the case, to check up on the results of our observations, and he found them correct.

In another case, a highly educated blind man injured his head by a heavy fall in a street accident. His hearing and his equilibrium were badly affected. For many months he lost the ability of locating the direction from which sounds came, whilst at the same time his hearing was greatly diminished. Professor Dr. E. Frei, ear specialist in Vienna, was asked by the court in the subsequent inquiry to assess the damage done to the blind man. He carried out a great number of tests in my presence. The blind patient was still able to sense the sizes of different rooms which he had never entered before and to avoid obstructions. With the sincere help of the patient, the doctor established that he heard all sounds from farther to the right than they actually came. That confused him greatly whilst walking alone, since it interfered with the sensations of pressure on his bare skin.

To my knowledge, nobody has so far carried out exact experiments with blind people on these sensations. This surely would be a task worth undertaking. The results of such experiments would quite likely also be of practical value to the blind. All I know is that these sensations are greatly dependent on weather conditions and that many other components—for instance, the personal disposition of the testee at a particular moment, to enumerate

only one—are responsible for results. That is to say, for the particular reaction at a given time under given conditions. The sensations are more intense if no hat is worn.

I do not think that there need be a fair volume of noise for the blind person to obtain good results whilst moving alone in the streets. On the contrary. I have been on many hiking trips in the countryside at night time, and, during them, I frequently tried to make observations on my movements. I have never had better results than on quiet spring and summer nights. The sharp intermittent sound of one's own footsteps which throw their echo plainly in complete stillness have always proved to be most serviceable. I wore heavy boots on those hiking trips. Blind people themselves, and those responsible for buying footwear for them, should always bear in mind that the blind should be able to hear the sound of their footsteps unblunted, and that therefore rubber soles and heels are not suitable for the blind.

When the experienced ear of the blind is able to pick up sound relations, and conditions are favourable to feel the sensations of pressure on the bare skin, the best possible results will be found whilst moving alone safely and quickly. As soon as heavy traffic running along a road drowns single sounds, one has to depend on the sensations on the skin alone which, as I have said before, only work under conditions which have not yet been investigated and frequently desert the blind person who walks by himself.

Even the experiments which Mr. Coates's Tom carried out are not conclusive in proving that it is only the hearing which conveys the results obtained. In his first experiment Tom deprived himself of the functioning of both hearing and skin pressure sensations. When, in his second experiment, he left his ears uncovered, he knew the place well and thereby obtained good results. If he had carried out the same experiments in a place totally strange to him, he would most likely have found that his movements would not have been so sure and quick as if he had walked normally, with head bare.

When, in his final experiment, he closed his ears and left his face and head uncovered he lost his bearings not because he could not use his ears but simply because the blind man needs not only his hearing and the sensations of pressure on the bare skin, but a mental concentration on the task of walking and a continuity in his movements, of which he has to be continuously aware whilst walking. He must always know which are the last move-

ments which he has just taken. Without this concentration and the awareness of continuity of movement, the blind man loses his bearings unflinching.

A very capable blind farmer friend of mine used to tell one incident to point out what a pretty poor fish the blind man was. He was hay-making with the help of one of his farm labourers on a wide field. For some reason he had to send the farm-hand back to the farm. He carried on, walking to and fro, building up the haystack. Suddenly he forgot how he had taken his last steps, and for three hours he was unable to find the haystack which was already fairly high! All that time he walked to and fro on the field as systematically as he could manage.

I made a simple experiment the other day on Box Hill to prove that conscious continuity of movement and concentration are indispensable for the blind besides the full use of his hearing and the sensations of pressure on his skin.

I came walking along the road leading from Tadworth past the hill top through the National Trust property and then on the well-known zig-zag down to Burford Bridge. I knew that I would have to pass several bends of the road and that shortly, one after another, I would pass several paths leading down into the woods, one drive leading up to a house, and one side road which leads straight down the hillside. It was this road, called the old military road, which I wanted to take. Thinking of Tom walking round and round his own room, I was quite successful to take no notice of my way. Eventually I could not help observing that I had left the road and taken one of the turnings. I did not know which. Instead of checking up where I was, I walked on, only to find myself soon without a path amidst the trees and undergrowth of the wood.

Again, instead of retracing my steps carefully to regain the interrupted continuity of my walk, I started to walk hither and thither trying to find my way. After a couple of minutes, I had hopelessly lost my bearings, although I know that part of the country and all its roads and paths particularly well, and I have been walking there frequently in all kinds of weather. Now I was lost quite in earnest. There and then I finished with my experiment, convinced "what a poor fish a man was" who could not check with one glance of his eyes a familiar neighbourhood. I had to wait a long time until I heard a lorry passing along the road in the distance. By its sound I made sure where the road was and where its bends and the zigzag were situated. Within

a few minutes I was on the road again, and found the turning which I wanted.

A day or two ago I had a small experience which I think interesting and significant in this connection. I was walking across the yard of a big engineering firm. There were workshops on both sides of me, and the clatter and humming of machinery made it quite impossible for me to listen to my own footsteps

or to pick up any particular sound. Suddenly I stopped abruptly, and feeling with my stick I touched a workman standing quietly in the yard, his back turned to me. I asked him whether he had just moved and was told that he did not think he had. But even should he have done so, it would have been impossible for me to have heard his movement in the noise of the machinery.

THE BLIND IN MODERN RUSSIA—II.

F. LE GROS CLARK

IN the first part of this article some mention was made of the work of the Russian Society for the Blind, which came into existence about twenty years ago. Through the large grants this organisation obtains from the Government, it is enabled to carry out most of the activities on behalf of the blind, with which we are familiar in this country or in America. There are, for example, about 180 clubs or special rooms in the normal clubs devoted to the interests of blind persons. Five Braille printing establishments have been opened in various parts of the Union. The output prior to the present war seems to have been considerable. Thus in 1938 the Moscow printing works is said to have printed about fifteen million new double-sided Braille impressions. The article that records this figure refers also to the proposed installation of new Braille printing machines, which would increase the output.

There seem to be about 136 libraries for the blind in the territories of modern Russia. Five journals in Braille are published for adults and children; and in addition the local supporting organisations of the society appear to undertake the publication of Braille newsheets for the reading-rooms and workshops, etc. Such local newsheets are a common feature of Russian factory and office life to-day; they are often referred to as "wall newspapers" and usually contain short articles or comments contributed by their readers.

According to reports in the Russian press some attention is also paid to the organisation of reading circles, where topical and general literature can be read aloud to groups of blind persons. The blind students at secondary and high schools receive an additional 20 roubles monthly on their stipend to assist in meeting the fees of a regular reader.

The Government in Russia is, of course, faced

with the establishment of schools in a large number of languages. It has also been the policy of the present Government to encourage the maintenance of the local language and culture, a problem upon which Stalin has himself written at length. It follows that the same principle has to hold with the schools for the blind. The training of such children is mainly undertaken through a number of free special boarding schools. The education given is both general and professional. A few advanced schools have also been instituted for the training of young men and women, who are blind and who show a special aptitude for organising among the blind population as a whole. It was stated that in 1938 there were about a hundred taking a course in these special colleges.

It is possible from summaries of books published in Russia during the last decade, to get some idea of the educational principles accepted in Russia to-day. For example, a book by Professor B. E. Kovalenko insists on the importance of using demonstration material in combination with oral teaching. Speech, says the writer, must be clear and varied, because there is the tendency among blind children to speak monotonously and without facial movement. It is important, in the opinion of Professor Kovalenko, that children should be taught to listen to reading aloud; for otherwise they will not easily enjoy the radio. Mathematics again requires special care, in that the blind have difficulty in grasping large numbers.

The writer's suggestions on methods of training the perceptions of blind children are particularly interesting. He considers that the sense of smell is frequently neglected by teachers. Blind children, he says, contrary to the usual opinion, grasp the nature of objects as a whole before they grasp the significance of their parts, just as do sighted children. For this reason it

is important to give the children a sense of the whole object as early as possible and to train them in using one hand as a focal point, while moving the other dexterously about the object. He also maintains that the sight-memory of such children as have once had vision should be stimulated ; and that it is good for the blind to mingle with the sighted in order that they may obtain some sense of the manner in which the sighted view the world about them.

"The study of movement," he adds, "is especially necessary for the blind, whose world is more static than that of the seeing. It may be given directly or with the help of aids, such

as sculpture, etc. It is important for pupils to reproduce movements either with their hands and bodies or by making self-acting models and the like."

These principles of education are doubtless not very dissimilar from those familiar to teachers of the blind in our own country ; but it is of interest to observe the development of theory among our allies. We may hope that after the war there will be many opportunities for specialists in our two countries to learn from each other's experience ; and that joint conferences and visits may be arranged for the mutual discussion of common problems.

TRAINING AND PLACEMENT OF BLIND TELEPHONISTS

Training

Since September, 1939, the National Institute for the Blind has trained 53 blind telephonists, of whom 39 were men and 14 were women. Eighteen of these were trained on the Institute's Headquarters switchboard, and 35 at Oldbury Grange, Bridgnorth. Ten were war-blinded civilians.

Placement

Forty-seven of the trainees are now in full-time employment as telephonists. Two of the remaining six gave up telephony in favour of shorthand-typing, three refused subsequent employment after losing their first job, and one is unemployed on medical grounds.

The employers of these telephonists fall under the following headings :—

1. Government Departments—10 on Employment Exchange switchboards, 1 with a Regional Office of the Ministry of Labour, 1 with the Northern Ireland Ministry of Agriculture, and 1 at the American Army Headquarters.
2. Local Authorities—2 with War Agricultural Committees.
3. Hospitals—9.
4. Commercial Firms—20.
5. Public Utility Corporations—3.

Having regard to the nature of the firm, and the undertaking (if any) given when employment commenced, the Institute estimates that 24 of these positions are permanent, 15 probably permanent, and 8 merely wartime appointments.

Wage Rates

The following are starting rates, including wartime additions :—

- Ministry of Labour : Men, £3. 11s. 6d. ; Women, £2. 17s. 6d.
Hospitals : Men, £3. 10s.-£3. 15s. ; Women, £2. 15s.-£3.

Commercial Firms : Men, £3. 10s.-£4. 5s. ; Women, £2. 17s. 6d.-£3. 7s. 6d.

Training Policy and Selection

The fact that the demand for blind telephonists now exceeds the supply makes it possible to place trainees only in jobs which carry some prospect of permanence. The difficulty lies in inducing telephonists, who can obtain a wartime post in their own locality, to move to an area where they can obtain more permanent employment possibly at a lower wage.

To justify permanent employment, the blind operator must be a thoroughly efficient telephonist. He must have some knowledge of shorthand and typing to enable him to record calls, and transmit telegrams. The applicant for training need not be a scholar, but he should be able to read and write Braille accurately. He should have a good memory, the faculty of attention and the gift of courteous voice and manner. An applicant with a position to go to will be given priority. He will not, however, be rejected solely because he has no immediate prospect of employment, provided he is prepared to take up residence in any part of the country where permanent work can be found. The Institute will welcome applicants, up to 50 years of age, who possess these qualifications.

There is no reason for fearing that drop-signal switchboards, which are the only type the blind can operate, will be replaced, in the near future, by light-signal boards. The Post Office has only one type of single position light switchboard, and it is not likely to be generally adopted, as its rental is high and, unless the board is exceptionally busy, it is no more efficient than the drop-signal type.

LONELINESS

IN a letter which we received recently from a blind correspondent there is a passage which ought to be pondered by every reader of this journal. "People often remark how cheerfully I go about—ah, but very often with a very sad heart within, which no one guesses, let alone knows about. I am not, of course, the only one who is lonely and without friends. Still, in a professing Christian country like ours, these things should not be. Where are the societies that are supposed to find comforts of one sort or another for the afflicted? We go to Church, but no one takes any notice of us. . . . The public, I think, are so afraid that we blind, as a class, are always thinking about their pockets. But we're not! No, we want companionship, sociability and friendly intercourse. . . . If we can't think, talk and act as sensibly as our sighted fellows, then it's a pity!"

We believe that in these poignant words our correspondent is expressing the thoughts of many hundreds of blind people, especially elderly people, who up and down the country are lost to the world in the loneliness of their lives. As he says, these things indeed should not be, and probably there are many helpers of the blind who will indignantly deny that they are. But from other letters which we have received, and from our own observation, we feel certain that there are far too many blind people who are condemned, not by wilful or careless neglect, but by inadequate machinery or innocent ignorance, to pass their days in dreary and drab surroundings with their minds imprisoned in the monotony of silent uninterrupted introspection. Loneliness is a corrosive which bites into the mind and eats into the heart. Even when sight can feed the thoughts and emotions with antidotes in the throng of a city or within the unfathomable arcs of earth and sky, loneliness can clutch us to its cold breast. How much more so when the eyes are veiled and darkness presses interminably against the natural means of egress from solitary thought and feeling?

To strengthen the belief that the loneliness of the blind is not due to lack of sympathy with them, we should bear in mind that a solitary person without sight is far less alone out of doors in an inhabited locality than a solitary person with sight. No one takes notice of a man passing lonely through the crowd. But almost everyone takes notice of a single blind man passing through the crowd. There he cannot be lonely. He is seen, he is watched, he is spoken to, his arm is taken, he has a host at his elbow, anxious to guide him, to chat to him and to show their friendliness towards him. But they are passing only; he goes into his house, shuts the door, and he is alone. He may listen to the wireless, he may read Braille, he may busy his hands with a craft, but all the time he is waiting—waiting for the knock on the door that announces the visitor, for the voice that will give him rich matter to absorb his attention, for the kindness, the thoughtfulness, the affection that will encircle his life with light.

Many of those friendly passers-by would very likely be glad to pass the portal which stands between the impersonal and the personal and become the welcome visitor, the intimate friend. If a Home for the Blind is opened, there is usually a drift of neighbours to its doors anxious to come and talk and read to the residents and to take them for walks and amusements. There is no lack of friends for the blind when those who wish to become friends know where they can find the blind. But who knows where the solitary blind are? Neighbours may know where a blind person lives, but they may conclude that he is with his family, that he does not need them. Only the Home Visitor knows. Her visits will break the monotony of a lonely life as a silver bell breaks silence, but it can be but seldom, for she has more than enough to do.

May we suggest two steps to relieve the loneliness of the solitary blind? First, could not each local Society for the Blind compile a list of the blind coming under its care who are anxious for friendly visits, and then appeal through the press, through clubs and associations, for the friendly visitors? Armed with the two lists, of the seekers and the sought, it should be comparatively easy for the Society to forge dozens of links of lasting friendship. Secondly, although we know that in the multifarious duties of a present-day parish the clergy have little spare time, could they not, in favour of their blind parishioners, revive once more that old seemly custom of making themselves one with their flock by dropping in to see them, now and again, just for a chat? They would be well rewarded, we believe, by the gleam that would radiate, at the sound of their greeting, from many a face where the eyes can no longer gleam.

THE EDITOR.

MAPS FOR THE BLIND

By LEONARD HARDCASTLE

III.—A History of the Development of Maps for the Blind, 1784—1920

(i) Early Days in the Education of the Blind (Abridged (with comments) from "The Education of the Blind")

"The first school for the blind was founded in Paris in 1784 by Valentin Haüy, who also originated the use of print in raised letters, employing italic type for the purpose. The education of the blind in England began to take form a little later, and in 1791 the first institution was established in Liverpool." By 1843 at least a dozen schools were established in different parts of the country.

"The teaching given in these schools during the first half of the century was hampered by the fact that as yet no embossed type had been generally adopted; the different institutions sponsored different types, and as a result books were limited in number and costly in price. At the same time, these early institutions did fine pioneer work in removing the blind admitted to them from the mental stagnation which hitherto had been their lot, and the variety of apparatus which has come down from early days is witness to the ingenuity, whole-hearted devotion and endless patience of these first educationalists."

"An important development of voluntary work for blind education was the foundation in 1868 of the British and Foreign Blind Association, now the National Institute for the Blind. Its founder, Dr. Armitage, was untiring in his efforts to forward the use of Braille"—invented by Louis Braille in 1829—"in schools for the blind throughout the country, and his work in bringing this type to the notice of educationalists certainly resulted in its general adoption at an earlier date than would have been the case without his zealous labours."

The Education (Blind and Deaf) Act of 1893 imposed upon Local School Boards the duty of providing educational facilities for blind children living in their area. In other words the education of the blind was compulsory. This was a great step forward. It meant a public recognition of the fact that it was possible to educate the blind, and the highest tribute that could be paid to Valentin Haüy, Louis Braille and particularly to Dr. Armitage and his colleagues of the British and Foreign Blind Association.

Secretary to Dr. Armitage was Mr. G. R. Boyle who invented the first mass produced

embossed maps for the blind, upon a system which, brought up to date, still forms the most successful maps for them to-day. Of these we shall speak later.

(ii) Maps Made by Individual Teachers

Amongst the "variety of apparatus which was witness to the whole-hearted devotion and endless patience of those first educationalists," maps played a prominent part. I have seen excellent maps made last century which with but little attention, *by inserting names* would make them up to date. At the National Institute's headquarters is an excellent map of the United States of America. It is now a "museum piece," but it is further evidence of the zeal of those early pioneers.

These are but examples. In all schools for the blind, teachers had striven hard on their own lines of thought. All honour is due to them. They designed and manufactured their own maps, either in wood, cardboard, or even flour and water. In all these maps the coast line was sharply raised, and raised lines marked railway communications, country or county boundaries, and so on. Physical maps were usually in relief. *These maps seldom contained any place names.*

Still, children were taught, and taught well. I know by the knowledge displayed by my adult friends—a great tribute to the teachers of those days—for *without their assistance those maps without names would have meant nothing to them.* There were, however, advantages and disadvantages which could not apply to-day. Classes were smaller in those days. Ten or twelve children in a class are easier to handle than twenty. It was a retrograde step in the early 1920's when national economy increased the size of classes to twenty. Then again, life in the Victoria-Edwardian days was much slower and demanded less of the individual than to-day. *On the other hand with only one map for the class, it meant that each child had to be shown a new feature and have it explained to him individually, whilst his classmates did nothing or next to nothing.*

When educational publishers and manufacturers began to produce plaster cast relief maps, these were purchased and used in our blind schools. Enthusiastic teachers pushed drawing pins into them, used string and all

kinds of odds and ends to make them convey information to the blind. These maps afforded some relief to teachers, but they could not convey everything to their pupils. Teachers therefore continued to make their own political and communications maps and so on *and to insert names in them.*

(iii) The Boyle Maps of 1876

The following information regarding the first published *individual* maps for the blind was kindly supplied by the staff of the National Institute for the Blind, to whom I am extremely grateful.

"The first mention of maps in the Minutes of the British and Foreign Blind Association appears in 1876 when maps of the two hemispheres and one illustrating the missionary journeys of St. Paul were approved. Dr. Armitage took a keen personal interest in the production of maps, which was undertaken by his Secretary, Mr. G. R. Boyle. In a Congress in Paris in 1878, Dr. Armitage said that the maps were produced by an electrotypes die, the land being raised above the sea, mountains, towns and boundary lines being raised, lakes and rivers sunk.

"In a letter from Mr. George Boyle in 1941, he wrote: 'My father invented embossed maps for the blind. Night after night he used to experiment with plaster cases and in the end evolved a system by which registration could be true. The difficulty was that when the printed map was damped and stretched to allow for mountains, etc., it got out of true. He had a small factory at Barnes in those days and after the maps had been cut on a plaster slab a cast was taken; then both portions put in a bath of (I think) sulphuric acid with copper wires through which a current was passed. A deposit of copper made a layer over the maps and the embossed sheets so formed were backed up with rubber and the maps themselves embossed between them in a huge press. Afterwards we backed up the mountains with plaster. My brother before he died made a number of guides to maps.'

"In 1927 the new process of making embossed maps was approved, whereby two maps were issued for each country, one of mountains and rivers, the other rivers and towns.

"In 1930, Mr. Arthur Boyle, son of the other Mr. Boyle, died. He had carried on his father's work of embossing maps."

The 1927 maps are the new maps and guides which demand special mention later.

Some of these original Boyle maps were in existence in the Leeds School until a few years ago. I remember quite well the hemisphere

maps and those of Scotland. These latter showed not only the mountains and rivers, but also the main railway routes. Here, Mr. Boyle made a mistake, for the railway routes looked very much like mountain ranges, and one of my adult blind colleagues told me she remembered them quite well and could not tell the difference between mountains and railways, and in the end she gave up trying. We must not blame Mr. Boyle. Little or nothing was known about the psychology of the blind in those days. It was believed that if any line was transferred into a raised edge, the blind could "feel" it, and then their perception would be the same as that of a sighted person. This may be a crude way of expressing the matter, but it is bare fact. Even as late as the Survey "The Education of the Blind," it has had to be admitted that no satisfactory "scientific" conclusions had been reached with regard to the psychology of the blind.

(iv) Braille Maps and Atlases

After the Boyle maps came the Braille atlases. The success of Braille as a medium for reading or writing for the blind led to the conclusion that Braille maps would be equally successful. Here the same hypothesis was assumed—"Translate into tactile sense that which the eye perceives and then the mind of the blind person will perceive it also." Coastline was therefore shown by bold dots, rivers by fine dotted lines, low ground by regularly spaced fine dots, mountain areas by large dots clumped together, and the sea smooth. A difficulty arose with regard to naming. Braille names take up a considerable amount of space, so numbers on the maps were substituted. Thus, when a number was found, the blind person had to turn to the "numerical key," and wade through a sequence of numbers until he arrived at the clue to the number he required. Conversely, if he wished to find any place on the map, he had to read through an "alphabetical key" until he arrived at the name he required and so discover its number, before he could find the position on the map. What a performance! Sometimes children remembered the numbers of certain towns, and when they came to a new map, they found to their surprise that the same numbers referred to different towns this time! Then, again, it was impossible to super-impose either Braille names or numbers on areas already dotted, so an area had to be left smooth where a number had to be inserted. Thus all numbers appeared to be in little lakes. One of the blind teachers (in Leeds) objected strongly to this. Of all the blind persons I have met and questioned only two liked the Braille maps.

In America this type of map was being produced in great quantities as a works project to relieve unemployment. At the request of the N.I.B., I called a meeting of blind friends to consider these maps and none of them liked them.

(v) England and Wales Map with Names on the Reverse Side

I cannot discover who designed this map. It evidently was not a success. I am not surprised. Land areas were raised, rivers sunk. Towns were indicated by holes through which the homely dotter could be thrust. Then, by

turning the map over, or reading with the free hand, the name of the town could be discovered nearby on the reverse side. The confusing conceptions which would be formed in a blind child's mind can be imagined, although the reasoning which led up to such an idea can soon be discovered. *The insertion of names on small maps for the blind does present almost insurmountable difficulties.* The designer of this map does therefore deserve some mention for his attempt to overcome this difficulty.

(To be continued.)

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

Revision of Blind Welfare.

SIR,—I believe Sir Wm. Beveridge suggested the revision of Blind Welfare be undertaken by a Committee of qualified persons in consultation with the Ministry of Social Security. It would be interesting to know whether such a Committee has or is being formed, and whether it will consist wholly of our established administrative leaders.

If representative Home Visitors and other district workers could be included, and if the pages of THE NEW BEACON were offered as a medium for individual views on the betterment of Blind Welfare, valuable information might be forthcoming, for however complacently some of our leaders may view the present scheme inasmuch as it provides certain training, education and a higher scale of relief than the Social Welfare maximum, there remain many anomalies, grievances and limitations which might usefully be aired at the present time.

Yours, etc.,
A. K.

To the Editor.

Correspondence in Braille.

SIR,—I have been discussing with some of my friends the limited number of careers open to blind people. On each occasion the question is asked: "Why is it that when we write to an organisation for the blind we invariably receive typed letters from them?"

Personally I feel very strongly on this point. I know we can ask our friends to read our letters for us, and they do it willingly; but when such a system as Braille exists I think it should be used as widely as possible. Admittedly there are a few people, having lost their sight well after school-leaving age, who might prefer typed letters; but I am sure that these people are in

the minority and could ask especially for typed letters as we have to ask for Braille ones now. If such places as the National Institute and the National Library wrote to their blind correspondents in Braille, the money saved on the stamps of the letters would almost cover the extra expense involved in employing efficient Braille writers, and typed copies of the letters could easily be made for reference if necessary.

Trusting that this suggestion will receive the careful consideration of any organisation concerned.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,
D. J.

(The National Institute is always willing to carry on correspondence in Braille if requested. But it does not do so as a matter of course, because, first, it cannot always be sure the writers of letters in typescript or manuscript are blind, or if blind that they can read Braille, and, secondly, correspondence in Braille does entail extra work as the letters received and their answers have to be copied in typescript for filing purposes.—EDITOR.)

To the Editor.

The National Institute and the Royal Charter.

SIR,—May one who took a somewhat prominent (and, I hope, important) part in the discussions which eventually led to the acceptance by the N.I.B. of the Joint Committee's Co-ordination Scheme and who has since followed very closely the proceedings in the Council, supplement in one or two particulars the chronological statement and the Editor's very incisive remarks on Captain Cochrane-Barnett's misleading letter published in the October issue of THE NEW BEACON.

For two years after its initiation the Joint Committee's scheme was discussed from every angle by those whom it affected. The Region (as then constituted) of which Captain Cochrane-Barnett is now Chairman conducted its part of those discussions, both through its accredited

leaders and by deputy, with skill, acumen and persistence. It was only after agreement had been obtained to the general principles of the Joint Committee's scheme by all those who decided to come in that the Royal Charter was initiated to implement those principles.

But, simultaneously, the National Institute, without awaiting the completion of the Charter, took steps by Special Resolution to raise the number of representatives on the Council contemplated by the scheme including, of course, the Regional representatives. Is it not ironical that some of the Regional representatives who gained admission to the Council by acceptance of the principles of the scheme should now decide to "submit a minority report" to the Privy Council or, in other words, to try to throw a spanner in the works? They seem to me to have made a complete *volte-face*. Would it not be more honest and honourable for such representatives to retire from the Council?

It is pointed out in your leader that the principal source of funds of the Regions consists in sums of money allocated to them by the Local Authorities. Proceedings before the Privy Council will cost money—possibly a considerable sum. Is it not even more ironical that funds provided by the Local Authorities should be applied in opposition to the scheme promulgated by the Local Authorities' own Joint Committee? I wonder what view the Joint Committee takes of the matter.

Yours, etc.,

R. B. HUGHES-BULLER.

Member of N.I.B. Council 1928-1943
(retired).

To the Editor.

Fantasy and Facts.

SIR,—I am more than amazed to read a letter under the above heading in the October issue of THE NEW BEACON and hasten to say that—whosoever is the writer using the signature "Puzzled"—it would have been better had the facts been quoted and not misquoted as has been the case.

No controversial subject was referred to by me at Wrexham but a few points stated by way of explanation of the work which the Regional Council had done.

With regard to the reference to Sir William Beveridge, I quite agree that there is not one of us who could *make* another person do anything and nothing is farther from the truth than to be quoted as having said such a silly thing. The notes you insert in your paper prove that you find it hard to believe such a statement. What I did say was that in November, 1941, the

Regional Council presented a Considered Statement to the Welsh Parliamentary Party and therein *asked* that evidence should be taken from *all* types of Agencies for the Blind.

With regard to finding employment, I agree that the main object *is* to find such employment and I said that before the war we were engaged in this kind of work. I also reported on the action taken by our Chairman in fixing up vital contacts which, we believe, led to action being taken by the various Government Departments. We know that much *thought* had been given to this, but we do know also that immediately after this contact had been established there was a quickening of placement and it is action which counts after all. We would not like any blind person to suffer but, like Mr. Eagar, we feel credit should be given where it is due and much *is* due to Alderman Sir Herbert Hiles, J.P., M.B.E.

At the very inception of the British Wireless for the Blind Fund we were told that the suggestion of setting up this body came from the B.B.C. itself and that (as Mr. Eagar says) the B.B.C. insisted upon a separate organisation representative of all branches of blind welfare and wireless work, and, with a view to giving credit where it is due, I have always felt that tribute must be paid to the B.B.C. No politics or personalities were indulged in by myself nor anyone else so far as I know and I regret very much the mischievous tone of the letter written by "Puzzled" and the suggestion of Mr. Eagar that kindly people were "regaled with politics and personalities."

In conclusion, may I suggest that before going to print again "Puzzled" should be sure of his or her facts and I leave with him his own wording—fantasy.

Yours, etc.,

ETHEL RAWDEN,
Secretary.

Wales and Monmouthshire
Regional Council for the Blind.

(We have received a more circumstantial report of the Wrexham speech referred to by "Puzzled." We are very glad that Mrs. Rawden disowns the "fantasy" which was imputed to her by our correspondent.—EDITOR.)

To the Editor.

A Case for Reform.

SIR,—A man otherwise eligible for the Blind Old Age Pension loses what may be called this small State compensation for his handicap if his wife earns; and whatever private humiliation may result from his total dependency, married couples accept the qualifying conditions

that their income be regarded as joint for the purpose of B.O.A.P., etc.

But if such people have the legitimate desire to complete their happiness, the wife must cease work while she is producing and rearing a young baby, and as her income then ceases it is generally assumed that the man requalifies for B.O.A.P. during this period.

Facts disprove this in one instance. The wife when applying for leave expressed the hope that she might resume her occupation when her future baby became three months old. This was noted by the Pensions Officer when re-application for B.O.A.P. was made. During the same interview the woman's minute stock of war savings certificates were examined and the numbers of each certificate noted down, although I believe it is correct to say that they need not have been declared at all.

The wife's statements *re* previous salary, etc., were then verified with her employers. Some weeks later the man was informed that his original B.O.A.P. papers had been mislaid by the Pensions and he was asked to furnish two references of twelve years' standing. During this time the total joint income was 12s. p.w. N.H.I., until full Domiciliary Assistance was granted, on the understanding that B.O.A.P. arrears were refundable.

Four months later, shortly before the child was born, B.O.A.P. was refused because the income was "too high." An appeal against this decision drew the explanation that a six monthly estimate of the wife's earnings had been made, but no dates were given. The only inkling of what had happened was a verbal statement by the Pensions Officer that the wife's income for the twelve months following date of applying for B.O.A.P. would include some six months in the future when she *hoped* to work. Surely it presumes too much to assess a woman on her future earnings *before* her child is even born.

The leave period has now expired and the woman is still occupied with home duties and the care of her child, yet eight months after application letters are still being received asking for an approximate date of her return to work.

I believe it is popularly understood that B.O.A.P. is based on a Means Test of present income, and that, unwelcome as we find the Income Tax assessment on our past, it is not nearly so ludicrously unstable as an assessment on the earnings, if any, of the unknown future.

Apropos of this, (1) surely the State is evading responsibility in putting the onus on the Local Authority, who, if the woman returns to work,

will lose the 10s. p.w. B.O.A.P. arrears to which they are justly entitled; (2) will the Pensions be willing to pay the full arrears if the pension is granted; and (3) when the wife is able to return to working independence once again, will the State or any other authority care two hoots how long she struggles to support herself, husband and child?

The views of readers would be welcomed.

Yours, etc.,

"INTERESTED."

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

A Distinguished Blind Organist.—A recent issue of the *Birmingham Mail* contains the following interesting note on Mr. Arthur Ruddock, of Great Malvern.

"Blind organist, recitalist, composer and adjudicator, Mr. Arthur Ruddock has completed 45 years as a player of the 'king of instruments.' For over a quarter of a century he has resided in the Midlands. He was formerly Midland branch organist on behalf of the National Institute for the Blind. Educated at the Royal Normal College, he studied the piano under Dr. Alfred Hollins, and chanting and harmony under Dr. E. J. Hopkins and Professor Bannister. He commenced the study of the organ at the age of 15, receiving tuition at the School for the Blind, Clifton, and at St. John's, Bathwick, Bath. Subsequently he became deputy organist of Bath Abbey. At the age of 19 he gained his L.R.A.M. diploma, being the first blind candidate to take this degree for organ playing at the Royal Academy."

Blind Organ-Blower for Sixty Years.—The Archbishop of Canterbury has joined with parishioners of St. John's Church, Bridgwater, in sending congratulations to Mr. Harry Norris, who has completed 60 years' service as organ-blower at the church. Mr. Norris, who is blind, has been presented with a cheque, to which over 200 residents in the town and district have subscribed.

Inspiring Music of Blind Artist.—The Music Critic of the *Bath Chronicle and Herald* prefaces his description of a recent recital in Bath by Mr. Thomas Marshall, the distinguished blind pianist, with these true words: "There are heroes who dwell in silence or darkness and who not only endure their lot patiently, but find means to uplift and inspire their fellow-men. The blind musician may enter the inner chambers of the divinest of the arts, and come

forth with a message of cheer or consolation."

The critic praised Mr. Marshall's "skill in choral effects" in Glazounow's Prelude and Fugue, his "great expression" and "skill in crescendo passages" in one of Beethoven's Sonatas, and his "penetrating insight and beauty of touch and tone" in a Fantasia of Chopin's.

First Blind Lawyer in Palestine.—Sheikh Fahmi Bissesso is the first blind man in Palestine to be admitted to the Bar, says Reuter. He has just received his licence, which authorises him to appear before Moslem religious courts.

Sermon by a Young Blind Student.—Mr. Jack Brown, a young Edinburgh man, blind from childhood, preached his first sermon as regular assistant in Richmond Church, Craigmillar, Edinburgh, last month. Mr. Brown, who attended Craigmillar Blind School for five years, is now a student at New College. He fulfils all the duties of a minister, visiting the congregation, and is leader of the boys' club in connection with the church.

A Successful Blind Singer.—In a previous issue of THE NEW BEACON attention was drawn to the musical activities of Mr. George Palmer, a blind tenor lay clerk at York Minster, senior in service by two years to Mr. William Gibson, whose appointment last Christmastide added a second blind singer, in the capacity of Bass Songman, to the historic choir.

The experience gained by Mr. Gibson at Tenbury Wells as bass soloist in Sir Sydney Nicholson's choir served him in good stead at the Minster. During the early months, his daily duties necessitated much preparation in transcribing the required music into the Braille notation. On Palm Sunday the Minster choir gave Bach's "St. Matthew Passion," in which he sang with orchestra the beautiful recitative, "'Twas in the Cool of Eventide," in addition to one of the small parts (Judas). Apart from his work at the Minster, he is gradually establishing himself as a music teacher and concert singer. In the summer he rendered the vocal numbers in an organ recital by Dr. Paul Steinitz at St. Olave's Church, Marygate, York, and also contributed a group of songs at a concert given by the choir of Monkgate Methodist Church in Tempest-Anderson Hall during the "Holidays at Home" Week. On another national occasion, Hemsworth "Wings for Victory" Week, he twice took the part of Essex in the concert version of Edward German's "Merrie England." Surveying Mr. Gibson's achievements in the North, and realising that they have been accomplished in less than a year, we extend to him our heartiest congratulations.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—

Alderman Herbert Edward Rose, aged 65. He was one of the most widely-respected members of the Liverpool City Council. In addition to being a prominent member of the Liverpool Labour Party as whose representative he served continuously on the Council from 1919, he was actively associated with the work of the University of Liverpool from which he received the Hon. degree of M.A. last year, and will also be remembered for his great service both in connection with the pensioners and with blind welfare. He was for many years Chairman of the Blind Persons Act Committee and prominently associated with the Northern Counties Association for the Blind as well as with the management of the Liverpool Workshops for the Blind. He was a Member of the Council of the National Institute for the Blind, representing the Northern Counties Association. He was a great citizen, full of energy, courage and determination.

Mrs. Angelina G. Ladner, of Bay St. Louis, Missouri, U.S.A., aged 103. She was a church caretaker, and continued her work when she lost her sight 16 years ago, loving to look after her beautiful church, the Church of St. Joseph.

Eric C. Pritchard, M.D., F.R.C.P., at Exmouth, aged 77. He was an outstanding pioneer in the field of infant welfare, and was the first medical officer of the first infant welfare clinic in London, started by voluntary effort in the borough of St. Marylebone. The National Institute for the Blind and many blind persons owe Dr. Pritchard a big debt of gratitude. His knowledge of children was unrivalled in his generation, and of his own special interests there was none to which he devoted himself with greater keenness than the Sunshine Homes for Blind Babies, to which he acted as physician since their inception in 1917. His whole manner softened as he dealt with a child, and all children were attracted to him.

Amongst his other interests were the Infants' Hospital, Westminster, where he was medical director from 1922 to 1936; Queen Charlotte's Maternity Hospital; the training of nurses at the Wellgarth College; and all branches of pædiatrics, an interest crowned by his election in 1934 for the annual office of President of the British Pædiatric Association.

Miss Bald, of St. Raphael's School, a constituent part of the Mission to the Blind of

Burma. Miss Bald, who was acting Principal, died in tragic circumstances with a number of the girls of the school. Under military orders and escort, a party of 36 teachers and blind girls set out overland from Burma to India. After terrible experiences in mountainous country, where they sometimes waded waist-deep in water and thigh-deep in mud, they became too exhausted to go further, and all but five of the party died from exposure. The only bright spot in a story so grievous is the shining faith and courage of those who died and the attempted succour of the native peoples who helped them to the last, giving them such shelter and food as they could.

All-India Lighthouse for the Blind.

The first Annual Report of this organisation describes its activities since its inception in August, 1941, up to December, 1942. It started as a day school for five pupils, but a year later the work had grown, and there are now 12 boarders and 5 day students working under Mr. C. S. Roy, the Director, who is himself blind and has studied in America and in England. Braille reading and writing and elementary mathematics, vocal and instrumental music, canework and tailoring were first taught, but the industrial subjects have now been extended to include carpentry, weaving, bookbinding and envelope making. All the students are adults. Up to the present the Lighthouse has been dependent on voluntary funds, but it is hoped that the Government of Bengal and the Corporation of Calcutta may in the future help the institution with a capital or recurring grant.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,

224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

Customers, please note.

The Showroom of the National Institute will, in accordance with regulations for early closing during the winter months, be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. from the 8th November to 22nd January. The closing time on Saturdays will be as usual at 1 p.m.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRaille MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music are *net* but represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production.

Dances:		s.	d.
19054	Brodszky, N. A Fool with a Dream, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19055	Charles, Towers and Miller. Silver Wings in the Moonlight, Song Fox- Trot	0	6
19057	McHugh, J. Comin' in on a Wing and a Prayer, Song Fox-Trot	0	6
19056	Porter, C. You'd be so nice to come home to, Song Fox-Trot	0	6

BRaille BOOKS.

The prices represent the actual cost of production. Blind residents in any part of the British Empire are charged one-third of the quoted price.

All books and pamphlets are Standard English Braille, large size, interpointed, paper covers, unless otherwise stated.

Autobiography:

18631-3 **The Oaken Heart**, by Margery Allingham. 3 vols. 7s. 3d. per vol.

Braille Instruction Books:

19090 **Complete Introduction to Braille** (in three parts): Part II. Pocket size, pamphlet, interlined, stiff covers, loose-leaf. 4d. net. (Part III to follow.)

Fiction:

18159-61 **Death on the Boat Train**, by John Rhode. 3 vols. 6s. per vol.

18762-5 **Miss Mole**, by E. H. Young. 4 vols. 5s. 9d. per vol.

18744-51 **The Stars Look Down**, by A. J. Cronin. 8 vols. 7s. 3d. per vol.

Forthcoming Pandas.

No. 74. **Genius in Murder**, by E. R. Punshon. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

A baronet found dead in his own coffin, a priceless necklace stolen, a woman strangled in Notting Hill, a man murdered at the very gates of Scotland Yard—such are the main episodes of what the C.I.D. called "a nightmare case."

No. 75. **One World**, by Wendell Willkie. 3 vols. 1/6 net the set. Mr. Willkie's own vivid account of his 31,000 miles journey in 1942 from New York to Egypt, Jerusalem, Turkey, Iraq, Persia, Russia and China. It closes with his views on the difficulties of the present and the problems of the future.

N.I.B. Braille Annuals.

Strictly limited editions of the following Braille Annuals are being published early in December. Orders for copies should be sent now and will be met, in strict rotation, until the editions are exhausted. Cash should accompany order.

14295	Almanac, 1944.	10d. net.
14292	Calendar, Pocket Date, 1944.	2d. net.
19108	Christmas Annual, 1943.	6d. net.
14293	Diary, 1944. Large size, 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. by 5 in.	2d. net.
14293	Diary, 1944. Small size, 5 in. by 4 in.	1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. net.
14298	Scripture Text Calendar, Daily, 1944.	1s. 10d. net.
14297	Scripture Union Portions, 1944.	3d. net.

MOON BOOKS.

4676-4677 **Village on the Hill**, by J. Maarten. 2 vols. (Limited Edition.)

NEW APPARATUS.

BRaille WRITING CARDS.

Size 6 in. by 3 $\frac{3}{4}$ in. For use on the Tylor-Tatlow Frame. The board is linen faced and is intended to produce a reinforced dot which will be durable even though handled roughly, and legible for an indefinite period. Catalogue number 9426.

Per packet of 12 sheets, cost price 5d., special price 3d. per packet.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

Philosophy and Logic:		Vols.
Eaton, R. M.	General Logic: An Introductory Survey. Part III—Mathematical Logic ..	2
Theology:		
Gore, Charles.	The Philosophy of the Good Life	4

Social Sciences :	Vols.
Ginsburg, Morris. Sociology. (Home University Library)	2
Hicks, J. R. The Social Framework : An Introduction to Economics	3
Rowntree, B. S. Poverty and Progress ..	10
Sutch, W. B. The Quest for Security in New Zealand	3
Law :	
University of Cambridge, Faculty of Law. 1941. Outline of lectures on Legal History (Land Law)	2
Essays :	
MacCarthy, Desmond. Experience	4
French :	
Emerson, H. O. Practical French Course for Evening, Technical and Commercial Schools. Part I	2
German :	
Riemann, Kurt. Sieben Jungen und ein Hund. (ed. D. Jenner)	1
Biography :	
Priestley, J. B. Midnight in the Desert : A Chapter of Autobiography	3
History :	
Brett, S. R. British History, 1485-1688 : A School Certificate Course	5

NATIONAL LIBRARY FOR THE BLIND,
35, Great Smith Street, Westminster, London, S.W.1,
and
NORTHERN BRANCH,
5, St. John Street, Manchester, 3.

ADDITIONS.

Fiction :	Vols.
Ayres, Ruby M. Nothing Lovelier	3
Baum, Vicki. Grand Opera	4
Baum, Vicki. Ship and the Shore	4
Bell, Neil. Death rocks the Cradle	3
Brahms, Caryl, and Simon, S. J. No Bed for Bacon	4
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NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND HELPERS' LEAGUE

40, Green Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, 28.

Christmas Appeal.

During this war period, everyone will realise that our needs are greater than ever. It is with confidence that we again make our Annual Appeal, for, with your generous response, our Christmas gifts will not have to be curtailed.

All donations will be gratefully acknowledged, and should be sent to Mrs. L. Johnson, the Hon. Secretary, at the above address.

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

LONDON STUDY GROUP

The next meeting of the London Study Group will be held on Saturday, the 4th December, at 3.15 p.m., National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.I. Applications for membership are cordially invited.—ERIC LEARY (*Chairman*).

HOME TEACHERS EXAMINATION, 1944. Candidates anxious to obtain guidance and qualified instruction to assist them in gaining the Diploma are invited to apply for particulars of a Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

N.I.B. NEEDS TYPEWRITERS.

If any friends of the blind have typewriters for sale, could the National Institute for the Blind have first chance? Standards or portables. Standard makes. In good working condition. Address: Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.I.

WANTED by St. Dunstan's, a qualified **Braille Shorthand Typing Teacher**. Further particulars from the Director of Training, St. Dunstan's, Church Stretton, Shropshire.

WEST OF ENGLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND, EXETER.

ASSISTANT FOREMAN required for the Workshops (mainly basketry). Excellent prospect of eventually taking control of Basket, Mat and Chair Caning Departments. Will work in close co-operation with the Sales Department and be responsible for ordering material and costing. State wages required and earliest date of commencing, to:—

A. SPENCER HOWARD,
Superintendent.

HOME VISITORS (sighted women) are required for work among the blind in London. Rate of pay (including cost-of-living bonus) starts at 73s. 6d. a week. For application form apply to Clerk of the London County Council (H), County Hall, London, S.E.1.

LADY, with wide experience of **BLIND WELFARE WORK**, including case-work, interviewing and administration, **REQUIRES POST** in London. Thorough knowledge of Braille, Braille shorthand, typing, telephony and statistical work, and accustomed to reporting meetings, compiling reports and articles, and general secretarial work. Apply to C., c/o The Editor, THE NEW BEACON, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

STOKE-ON-TRENT BLIND WELFARE DEPT.**BASKET FOREMAN.**

Applications are invited for the position of sighted Basket Foreman. Wages £4. 6s. 6d. per week, plus bonus (present rate of bonus, 17s. 6d. per week.) Successful candidate will be required to pass a medical examination, and to contribute to the Council's Superannuation Scheme. Applications, endorsed "Basket Foreman," accompanied by three recent testimonials, to reach the undersigned not later than the first post on Tuesday, November 30th, 1943.

Town Hall, Stoke-on-Trent. E. B. SHARPLEY,
Town Clerk.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL.**Appointment of Home Teacher for the Blind.**

Applications are invited for the position of sighted certificated female Home Teacher for the Blind, under 40 years of age, for duty in Heywood and Whitefield.

Salary £156 per annum, rising by four annual increments of £13 per annum to £208 per annum plus War Bonus, at present £33 16s. 0d. per annum, together with travelling expenses.

The successful applicant will be required to live in or near Heywood or Whitefield; to pass a medical examination and to contribute to the County Council Superannuation Scheme. The appointment will be subject to one calendar month's notice by either side.

Applications, in applicant's own handwriting, accompanied by copies of not more than two recent testimonials, stating age, experience and qualifications, must be received by the County Medical Officer of Health, County Offices, Preston, not later than Saturday, the 27th November, 1943.

GEORGE ETHERTON,
Clerk of the County Council.

County Offices,
Preston.

The New **BEACON**

A MAGAZINE DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF THE BLIND

VOL. XXVII. No. 324.

DECEMBER 15TH, 1943.

PRICE 3D

Entered as Second Class Matter, March 15, 1929, at the Post Office at Boston, Mass., under the Act of March 3, 1879 (Sec. 397, P.L. and R.) 3s. PER ANNUM. POST FREE.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE BLIND WELFARE ASSOCIATION OF NORTHERN IRELAND

By M. MARION CHRISTIE

Supervisor, Blind Welfare Association of Northern Ireland.

I.—Blind Welfare Work in Northern Ireland before 1938.

Before 1938, Blind Welfare work was almost entirely confined to the cities of Belfast and Londonderry. In Belfast there was a workshop. Derry City also had a training-centre for employable blind people. The Belfast Society for Home Mission work among the Blind maintained a Home (restricted to Protestants in normal good health); this Society employed one Home Visitor for the blind people resident in Belfast (approx. 1,100). There were two other Homes, in addition to the one mentioned above, one for men in Armagh and one for Catholic women. But for the blind people throughout the Province nothing was done in the matter of general welfare; there was no visiting, no one to teach Braille, Moon, music or handicrafts.

II.—Formation of the Blind Welfare Association.

In 1938 the Blind Welfare Association of Northern Ireland was formed.

Constitution.—The Association is a Voluntary Agency, having a Chairman, Honorary Secretary, Honorary Treasurer and Council, under the Presidency of the Lord Chief Justice of Northern Ireland. It is registered as a charity, and publishes an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts.

Finance.—The formation of the Association was made possible by generous donations from two men who were interested in the cause of blind welfare. With these for capital, the Chairman and Council proceeded apace. The insufficiency of funds appeared to trouble no one, which courageous attitude was justified by the generous interest of the National Institute for the Blind, who gave not only advice, but a most necessary grant of money. The Government of Northern Ireland also proved their readiness to help in the development of Social Services, by providing financial assistance. The continuation of the Association is dependent upon the annual grants made by the Government of Northern Ireland and the Local Authorities, both of which subscribe to the enlightened view that welfare services are primarily a matter for official action, rather than private charity.

I would not like to pretend that our finances are in an agreeable state: we are like Oliver Twist, and would like another helping. We have now got to the stage where, organised, experienced and battle-tried (but not battle-weary) the only hindrance to the development of our services to blind people is the lack of money.

Commencement.—In 1938 the Association had a staff of—one. The Organiser's equipment, when she started, consisted of one small room (borrowed), one typewriter (her own) and one very old car (also her own). Her job, she was told, was to develop and maintain an adequate organisation for helping all the blind people in Northern Ireland. She has since confessed that, the day she stood in Donegall Place, with the city traffic hurrying past, and saw in imagination the fields and mountains of Ulster stretching beyond, she "was puzzled where to start."

Well she might have been, but start she did, and to some purpose. There is no space here to dwell upon the long and patient labours of those early days, when no one could produce a full list of blind persons, when all the roads were long each day, and the letters had to be typed at night. Six counties to cover, with lists several years old for one's only guide, no local committee to help (they had to be formed, informed and encouraged), no typist, no assistant—it was, indeed, a task for a dauntless heart.

And this we had in our Organiser to whom high honour is due for her tireless efforts, her boundless sympathy, and her keen resentment of poverty and injustice. She found no road too long to take, no task too hard to do, and, single-handed, achieved incredible results.

Growth.—The next year, 1939, saw a distinct change: three Local Authorities, Counties Antrim, Armagh and Down, availed themselves of the proffered services of the Association, and three Home Teachers were employed, one for each county, with anything from 250 to 400 blind people in her care. The Organiser then added to her other duties that of teacher and lecturer, for the Home Teachers were untrained.

Increased funds and the consequent employment of a fourth Home Teacher in January, 1940, meant that there was no longer room in the small office (borrowed) for all the Staff at once, and the newcomer had to lean outside the door. The Saturday morning conferences were conducted in a nearby café (which was pleasant in some ways) and the office work was done either at home or in the evening, or in railway and bus waiting-rooms.

But soon came the never-to-be-forgotten day when we got our own office and our own typist. Since then it has been a case of "three weeks a-growing." Now, in 1943, the B.W.A. is responsible for blind welfare work in Counties Antrim, Armagh, Down, Tyrone and Derry City. The head office is in Belfast, and the Executive Staff comprises the Organiser, two

Supervisors, one handicrafts Supervisor, one Typist, one Voluntary Worker and twelve Home Teachers, eight of whom hold the Home Teachers' diploma, as do the Organiser and the two Supervisors.

III.—Present Achievements and Future Aims.

I. Register.—In 1938 there was no complete register of blind people in Northern Ireland; indeed, there is not one yet. Local Authorities possessed a list only of those people in receipt of Domiciliary Assistance; the Government of Northern Ireland had a list of blind persons receiving the State Old Age (Blind) Pension; various Education Authorities had lists of blind children, but no central register existed.

One of the first tasks of the B.W.A. was to compile a central register. In those areas where we operate, i.e., Derry City, Counties Antrim, Armagh, Down and Tyrone, this has been done. The register is checked monthly, and is maintained in such a way that we can, at a moment's notice, tell exactly how many blind people there are in any County or District.

The register is divided into three sections:—

(i) *Registered Blind Persons*: i.e., Persons "blind within the meaning of the Act."

(ii) *Border-line Cases*: i.e., Partially blind persons, who are not "blind within the meaning of the Act," but who have been, or may become, so.

(iii) *Evacuees*: i.e., Blind persons evacuated from Belfast. Though officially we are not concerned with these people, we do in fact visit and teach them, treating them as though they were ordinarily resident in the areas in which we work.

Our Register lists all blind persons, whether in receipt of financial assistance or not. We would not venture to claim that we have a note of all the blind people there are in the North of Ireland, for, as Miss Hilda Bradfield pointed out in a recent letter to THE NEW BEACON, it is difficult to learn of blind children or adults who do not need, or choose, to apply for assistance from the State or Local Authority. But it is unnecessary to say here that a blind person possessed of ample means is as likely to need the help and companionship of a Home Teacher as a poor person.

Our Register, therefore, is not necessarily complete for the counties in which we do work, but it is daily becoming more so. There definitely are not adequate registers for County Fermanagh and County Derry. This work cannot at present be undertaken by us, as we do not receive the financial grants which would enable us to employ Home Teachers to work there.

County or Co. Borough	Popu- lation*	No. of blind persons	No. of sighted to 1 blind person
Antrim	191,643	429	446
Armagh	110,070	280	393
Down	209,228	397	527
Tyrone	132,792	378	351
City of Londonderry	45,159	76	594

* Figures of 1926 Census, being most recent ones available.

2. Finance.—The primary object, in considering the welfare of the vast majority of blind persons, is finance ; there is small use in offering to get a wireless set for, or teach a pastime occupation to, a man whose total weekly income is ten shillings. At the request of the Local Authority concerned, a social survey was made, first in County Down, later in County Armagh, to ascertain exactly the financial circumstances of the blind people. The result showed that many people were living on incomes far below the poverty-line or scale of minimum needs which was set by the Assistance Board for Northern Ireland. As a result of this, the Local Authorities introduced a definite scale of Domiciliary Assistance, equal to that of the Supplementary Old Age Pension, and when the latter was increased the Blind Persons Committees of the Local Authorities agreed to review all cases that we considered necessary.

The Home Teachers of the B.W.A. now act as official investigators of all applications for Domiciliary Assistance from the Blind Persons Committees of Armagh, Down and Tyrone County Councils. It has been debated before in THE NEW BEACON whether or not it is a good thing that a Home Teacher should play the part of Pensions Inspector for the Local Authorities. Our experience has been that it is a good thing for several reasons. For one, only a trained investigator can give the clear and detailed financial statement which enables a Committee promptly to decide if a blind person needs a grant, and, if so, how much. For another, it tends to stabilise the scale of grants, not only throughout a county, but throughout the whole of Northern Ireland. (Brigid O'Rourke is justifiably puzzled if she finds, on leaving County Down for County Antrim, that her grant varies ; and where she finds it is lower she is justifiably resentful.) Finally, when a Local Authority makes a grant to a Voluntary Agency, it has a right to command that Agency's services, and frequently there is no other means whereby applications can be investigated. Besides these reasons it is my considered opinion that the association between a Home Teacher and the

blind person in her care gains from the fact that the Home Teacher is the person who must obtain all information relating to the household, and who must be satisfied that financial assistance is necessary. It makes for increased intimacy and confidence, particularly in a country where the genus Home Teacher was unknown until four years ago. One of our Home Teachers recently got a letter of gratitude from an old blind woman, which read : " This is to give Mary's thanks both to yourself and the gentlemen of the County Council for getting her the pension."

Duplicate copies of all these applications for Domiciliary Assistance are filed in our office, and form very interesting matter for statistical comparison.

Whilst the present system still exists, the B.W.A. will urge the necessity for a definitive and adequate pension scale throughout each county, a scale which, having due regard for the variations in the cost of living in different areas, shall be equal throughout the whole of Northern Ireland.

But, and infinitely more important, our research has proven that the present state of affairs in this matter is chaotic, and the pensions are inequitable. The existing legislation does not meet the situation.

The admirable report of the Secretary-General of the National Institute for the Blind, published about a year ago in THE NEW BEACON, which clearly sets forth the anomalies and inequalities of the present system, has been confirmed in detail by our own experience. The remedy suggested in that report, a " State minimum " pension for blind persons, is the simple and logical one, and our main aim in this sphere is to urge the introduction of such legislation.

3. Welfare.—I shall not spend time describing the multifarious activities comprised in the term " general welfare." Our Home Teachers' reports are fascinating to read : ". . . I got old Mrs. Mallon the chiming clock her heart longed for." (Where *did* she get it ? We were afraid to ask.) ". . . Mrs. Calvert has been sore distressed at the dirt of her kitchen walls. She says, ' I may be dark in the sight, but I can *tell* it's dirty.' So I went down last Thursday evening and repapered it for her." The same Home Teacher, who is nothing if not practical, taught Mrs. O'Shane how to bake pancakes.

Incidents such as these are the delightful commonplaces in a life crowded with incident, sometimes funny, often heartrending, occasionally distasteful—the life of the Home Teacher

whose duties are listed under the heading of "visiting, teaching and general welfare."

The whole virtue of any Voluntary Agency is dependent upon the utility of its Home Teachers, who are at once its justification and its reason for existing. From the Home Teachers come the requests for wireless sets, white sticks, clothes, medicines (and such little things as chiming clocks, piano-accordions, and information on how to process sugar-beet). The Home Teacher is the person who fills in the pension form, argues with the insurance company, talks to the mother of a blind baby, fetches the nurse, the doctor and the priest, and makes the life of her Supervisor a misery with her continual cry of "I want . . . We must get . . . So-and-so must have . . ."

One can conceive of a Home Teacher working without a head office, but a head office without a Home Teacher is inconceivable, and her importance in any scheme of blind welfare cannot be over-estimated. She it is who quickens the dead report into reality, who colours the brief notes with understanding and sympathy. It is through her only that that distant and impersonal Committee can see not a page of figures, but a picture of starvation hardly borne.

(To be continued).

"Paper Brake"

THE Technical Research Committee of the National Institute for the Blind has more than once invited blind persons to let it know their requirements and difficulties. Send your problems in, and so long as they are not connected with perpetual motion or the making of bricks without straw, the Committee will try to solve them.

A few months ago a blind man told the Chairman of the Committee that a great need of blind typists was a means of knowing when they had reached the bottom of the sheet of paper on which they were typing; he and many of his friends found that they were sometimes so engrossed in what they were writing that they forgot to notice if there was any paper left. This does not matter so much for a sighted person, as he can see where the break in the writing occurs, and can then start on a fresh sheet, but the blind man, who cannot do this, must either call in sighted aid or start all over again.

The Committee has designed a very cheap and simple device for overcoming the difficulty. It consists of a backing sheet slightly longer than the sheet on which one is typing, with a length of string fixed across it in such a position as to stop the roller when nearing the bottom

Our work in this sphere, then, is threefold:—

(i) To train women of the right temperament and education for this work.

(ii) To provide decent working conditions. At present the working hours are too long—most girls average a ten, and many a twelve-hour day. The transport facilities, too, are utterly inadequate. A day's work which permits of only three visits and necessitates a 40-mile bicycle journey over moor, mountain and bog, is tiring enough in summer, but hazardous and unfair in winter. Yet such travelling is taken as a matter of course in North Antrim, South Down and Armagh, and throughout Tyrone. And the Home Teachers complain: "It's so slow . . . I can't get enough done . . . Waste of time, but I can't get there any other way . . . Oh, I was lucky, I got a lift in a milk van (or a cuddy and cart)." Never have our Home Teachers been heard to grumble at the personal discomfort involved. In this the Association reckons itself most fortunate, for we are aware that we possess a staff of real welfare workers.

(iii) Our third aim is to expand the Home Teaching Service. As yet, counties Derry and Fermanagh have no Home Teachers.

of the page; a short length of paper on the other side of the string allows the typist to pull the sheet backwards and to remove it when the writing is complete.

The National Institute is arranging to market a quantity of these sheets within a few months, and will probably sell them in sixpenny packets of assorted sizes.

In the meanwhile, if anybody prefers to make his own, it is quite easy to do. Take a piece of stout good quality paper, the same width (or a little wider) than the sheet on which you wish to type, and about $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches longer (for standard table model). About 2 inches from the bottom of the sheet fix a piece of thick string the full width of the paper by means of a strong strip of gummed paper pressed down over it; the strip can be about 2 inches wide, and the string is best of a rough soft texture. A simple means of fixing the string is to stretch it tightly round the end of a narrow table top, tying it underneath; then slide one or more backing sheets side by side under the string, with weights on each to keep them in position. Gum and press down your strips of paper, allow time to dry, then cut your string close up to the edges of each sheet, and the job is complete.

HOME NEWS

Lord Woolton and the Wireless Fund.—Lord Woolton has kindly consented to make the Annual Broadcast Appeal for the British Wireless for the Blind Fund on Christmas evening. He will broadcast at 8.55 p.m. Home and Forces Programme.

Massage School to be Enlarged.—The Massage School of the National Institute for the Blind is to be enlarged to accommodate many more students than at present.

One reason for the need of extension is the higher educational standard among the blind. More young people than ever before are passing through the Institute's two public schools at Chorleywood and Worcester. Provision has also to be made for war-blinded casualties in the Services and amongst the civilian population who may wish to take up massage as a profession.

New Rugby Hostel for Blind Women.—Warwickshire County Council are to purchase Tower House, Hillmorton, Rugby, for use as a hostel for blind women for the sum of £2,950.

Blind Girls Help Blind ex-Prisoners.—Blind girls of the Bedding Department Workshop for the Blind, 111, Saracen Street, Glasgow, have sent 10 guineas to the Red Cross to provide a treat for some of the blind repatriated prisoners.

Leicester's Blind on War Work.—A representative of the *Leicester Mercury* visited the Leicester Institution for the Blind last month and described some of the war work being done there.

"I saw," she said, "blind basket workers making casings for rum jars for the Admiralty. Many of these are used on the Russian trade routes. They are woven tremendously strong and are made on the jars. Air-borne panniers are being turned out in large quantities, also bass brooms for tropical countries, made with a special heat-resisting cement. Mats are likewise made for the Government. In the boot and shoe repairing section a special feature is made of Home Guards' boots."

The Institution has, in addition to its own workshop employees, a list of 53 blind people of Leicester engaged on national work for various firms in the district.

For War-Blinded Scots.—Service men and women blinded in this war who come under the care of the Scottish National Institution for the War Blinded (Newington House) will receive their initial training in the most pleasant of surroundings at Linburn House, Wilkieston, Midlothian. The Institution's rehabilitation

and training centre for the new war blinded, which has been recognised by the Ministry of Pensions as the Scottish training centre, will be of immense value.

Set in beautiful grounds, extending to 14 acres, Linburn House will be ideal for the purpose, and only the minimum of alterations will require to be effected before the first batch of 20 blinded soldiers take up residence, probably in January next year.

With the exception of the spacious billiard room, which is to be used for Braille and type-writing instruction, the house will be used for the purpose of accommodating the trainees. On the ground floor there is a charmingly appointed dining-room, a drawing-room which will be equipped as a recreation room, and a spacious men's smoking room. On the first floor four of the large bedrooms will be converted into dormitories. The stables, only a few yards from the house, will be gutted and equipped as workshops. Trainees will be instructed in, among other things, basket-making, joinery work and massage.

The kitchen garden and flower garden have been taken over, and it will be the aim of the directors to see that Linburn House is self-supporting in vegetables. Trainees whose sight is not entirely gone will have the opportunity of being instructed in horticulture. It is expected that a number of the men who receive their initial training at Linburn will enter a profession or find a niche for themselves in industry, but probably between 60 and 80 per cent. of them will finally be employed at Newington House, where all manner of crafts are carried through.

Disabled Persons (Employment) Bill.—The Disabled Persons (Employment) Bill, introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Bevin this month, is the first of the measures referred to in the King's Speech by which the Government propose to make preparation for the period after the war.

This Bill makes provision for the vocational training, industrial rehabilitation and registration of all disabled persons—whether they have served in the armed forces or not—and imposes on certain employers an obligation to employ a quota of the persons so registered. A memorandum which accompanies the text of the Bill says that on such assumption as can be made, the proposals may involve an annual expenditure of £3,000,000 a year "after a transitional period following the cessation of hostilities,

during which the demand for training is likely to be abnormally heavy."

A disabled person is defined as one "who, on account of injury, disease or congenital deformity, is substantially handicapped in obtaining or keeping employment, or in undertaking work on his own account, of a kind which, apart from that injury, disease or deformity, would be suited to his age, experience and qualifications. . . ." The Minister of Labour and National Service is given power to establish or arrange courses for the vocational training or industrial rehabilitation of the disabled and to pay the expenses of those attending. He is also to establish and maintain a register of the disabled.

The obligation on employers to employ a quota of disabled persons will apply to those who have "a substantial number of employees," by which is meant 25 or more. The quota obligation is imposed by prohibiting an employer who has less than his quota of disabled employees from filling a vacancy by engaging a person not registered as disabled, and from discharging without reasonable cause an employee who is so registered.

The quota will be the number of employees ascertained by reference to either a "standard" percentage or a "special" percentage of the total. The standard percentage and any special percentage will be specified by Order after the Minister has consulted organisations representing employers and workers. A special percentage, either greater or smaller than the standard, may be prescribed by the Minister for employment in any trade or industry, or with any class of employer, to which he thinks that a percentage other than the standard should be assigned "on the ground of its having distinctive characteristics as respects its suitability for disabled persons."

Another important proposal in the Bill is that the Minister may appropriate vacancies in certain employments to disabled persons only. After consultation with organisations representing employers and workers he may by Order designate certain classes of employment as being specially suitable for the employment of disabled, and it will then be an obligation on employers to reserve vacancies in employments so scheduled for persons registered as handicapped by disablement. Employers affected by the Bill will be required to keep records in accordance with regulations to be prescribed.

Provision is also made for the creation of facilities for employment or work under special conditions for those who are so severely dis-

abled as to be prevented from entering employment or taking work under ordinary conditions. These facilities may be provided by a non-profit making company established for the purpose and subject to the Minister's control; or by an association or body similarly constituted.

To assist and advise the Minister on matters arising out of the operation of this measure a National Advisory Council and District Advisory Committees are to be established. The Bill does not apply to Northern Ireland.

The Bill was given its second reading on 10th December, the case for the Bill being admirably presented by Mr. Tomlinson, one of the Parliamentary Secretaries to the Ministry of Labour, who was Chairman of the inter-departmental commission on whose recommendations the Bill is based. In the course of his speech he made the following reference to the blind: "Many years ago in dealing with the blind there was the 'brush-making and basket-making' consciousness. During the war, owing perhaps more than anything to the need for man-power, questions were asked about what the blind could do. Out of 1,100 people interviewed in the first instance it was found that 800 had been trained for jobs other than those which they had been doing before. Now there were 27 different categories in engineering in which the blind were being used. What could be done under the stress of war could be done, too, in peace-time."

The chief point of comment and criticism in the debate which followed was the extension of the benefits of the Bill to all disabled persons, but the measure was nevertheless accepted with cordiality on all sides.

N.I.B. Patience Board.—The new Patience Board, particulars of which were given recently in THE NEW BEACON, is being warmly welcomed by blind players of Patience games. "I used to be fond of Patience," writes one, "until the great darkness descended. I tried several times to play on a table, but had to abandon my efforts in despondency. Hence, my delight in your new board. I have tried some 15 simple games on it with success."

Recreational Clubs Needed in Northern Ireland.—The need for recreational clubs for the blind was stressed at a conference for home teachers called recently by the Blind Welfare Association of Northern Ireland. Representatives from the National Institute for the Blind, London, and delegates from Dublin and Cork were present.

Miss E. Hardy, secretary of the Northern Ireland Council of Social Service, gave an interesting talk on the scope and aims of social service, and Mr. Walton (a blind delegate from

Dublin); Miss Buckley (a home teacher from Cork) and Mrs. Robinson (handicrafts' supervisor for Northern Ireland) gave technical accounts of such crafts as rush and willow work.

Miss M. G. Thomas, from London, addressed the conference on the provision of occupation, and spoke in particular of the training difficulties.

Mr. H. Quin, F.C.A., the Chairman of the Blind Welfare Association, entertained delegates to lunch in the Carlton, and at the final session of the conference Mr. M'Auley, the Irish representative of St. Dunstan's, spoke.

Sale of Work at Deaf-Blind Home, Harrogate.

—From 7th to 9th December, Westlands, the National Institute's Residential Home for the Deaf-Blind at Harrogate, held its annual Sale of Work. For the first time it was opened by the Mayoress of Harrogate, accompanied by the Mayor, and the occasion was crowned by success. The total amount of the proceeds is not yet available, but it should amount to about £100; and the articles made by the deaf-blind residents, including baskets, stools, woven tray cloths and scarves, leather work and knitted toys were excellent in quality and attractive in style.

In opening the Sale, the Mayoress took great pains to address her remarks to the deaf-blind residents, her words being interpreted by members of the staff. She told them she was accompanied by the Mayor, "who is looking very nice, wearing his beautiful gold chain of office," and added: "I am also wearing my pretty gold chain which has been worn by Mayoresses of Harrogate since 1884." She said that everything they had made was beautifully done and that the pretty colours and designs were most attractive. "I have always taken a great interest in the work of the blind," she said. "When I was a child I lived in Leeds, and I can well remember visiting the Blind School there with my aunt, who spent much of her time there as Secretary."

A vote of thanks was proposed by one of the deaf-blind residents, Miss Alice Carter, who spoke clearly without any signs of nervousness.

After the Mayor and Mayoress had visited each stall they said they would like to speak to each resident in turn. They showed them their chains of office and described the jewels. The pleasure they gave was shown by the beaming faces of the deaf-blind.

As usual, Matron, Miss Fildes and Mr. Lowe were indefatigable, and a great deal of the credit for the function's success was due to them.

EMPIRE NEWS

Wasting Time by Looking ?—Major Leonard Cripps (brother of Sir Stafford Cripps) when in Canada recently watched 45 blind girls at work on power-driven sewing machines in Toronto; he was told that the sightless workers operated the machines at greater speed than workers in factories employing only the seeing, and said that during the last war, when he was in charge of a munition plant he had made an experiment. He had observed a sighted friend knitting with great speed while she did not glance at her work, and he blindfolded one of the girls working on a drill-press, after ascertaining that there would be no danger involved. She had been accustomed to watch every movement of the drill, and was at first completely confused and very slow, but gradually her movements became more and more automatic, and her speed increased, so that she finally took only 7 seconds to carry out a process which had previously taken her 21. As a result of the experiment, Major Cripps had shields fixed on some of the drills, so that the workers could not see their operation, and considerable time-saving resulted.

The Blind of Gibraltar.—Mr. A. E. Victory, who is now resident in London, but who looks forward to returning to Gibraltar when the war is won, has, since the inception of the Society for the Blind there in 1932 (a Society affiliated to the National Institute for the Blind) taken an active part in caring for the 37 blind men, women and children on the Society's Register. To-day the blind of Gibraltar are widely scattered: some are in Jamaica, some in Madeira, some in Tangier, two or three in London. Mr. Victory is able to keep in touch with those living here, and hopes that in the peaceful days to come he may again care for the blind living in Gibraltar and help to build up the work that war has interrupted.

Nearly Blind Scout Leads Foray.—The Solomon Islanders are known as the "world's stealthiest scouts," and they are now helping the Allies to rid the British Solomon Islands of the Japanese. A chief of the scouts called Ngatu is nearly blind, but this did not prevent him going on a raid with six other islanders. Relying almost entirely on his sense of touch, Ngatu helped the others to filch all the weapons from a Japanese camp at night, and, next morning, the enemy awoke to find themselves unarmed with the Scouts at hand ready to escort them to the nearest Allied prison camp.

MAPS FOR THE BLIND

By LEONARD HARDCASTLE

IV.—A History of the Development of Maps for the Blind, 1920–1940

(i) The Papier Maché Map of England and Wales.

Immediately after the last War the National Institute issued yet another type of map. I cannot trace the designer of this one either. The sales records of the N.I.B. show this map also to have been a failure. This surprised me greatly, for it was with this very map that I began to make a success of my geography teaching. It was a small relief map, approximately 24 inches by 18. The land was well raised, rivers were indicated by raising their right bank, and the vertical scale was not too severe. Towns were shown by well-defined dots, and only the most important ones at that. The map was admirable (in my opinion) for teaching purposes. Unfortunately, it was expensive (11s. each), and by the time the price was reduced to 2s., the new Boyle Maps and Guides had made their appearance at 1s. 6d. a set (to the blind). *The papier maché map contained no names, however, so the map by itself conveyed no new information to the pupil without the aid of his teacher.* This, in the opinion of a great majority, was the cause of its failure. Still, it had its good points, and the new map is a combination of the advantages of this style of map and the new Boyle maps.

(ii) My own Early Experiments in the Teaching of Geography.

When I was transferred to the Blind Department of the Leeds School in 1921, what apparatus had we for teaching geography? Mac-kinders' "Our Own Islands," Volumes 1 and 2, the Atlas of the British Isles, some of the original Boyle maps, three new terrestrial globes issued by the N.I.B., and the then new papier maché maps of England and Wales. Acting on the assumption that the blind were "just ordinary people like you and me" doctrine, I commenced with "Our Own Islands," and with the help of the corresponding sighted copy, proceeded on my way. The reading of the text went along satisfactorily enough, but when it came to the Braille maps it was quite a different story. Acting on the "something radically wrong with your teaching" theory of Training College days, I tried this method and that until holes were literally rubbed through the maps. It was not until one child in sheer desperation exclaimed, "I wish we had the maps we used

in Miss W——'s class, I could understand those!" that I tried the papier maché maps. Success followed immediately, and from that day forward the geography teaching became easy. I repeat, I cannot understand why there was not a greater demand for this map. I can only conclude it was *because it contained no names.*

Meanwhile, teachers throughout the country continued to make their own maps. The ones made by myself were made of plywood, and the land areas cut out by means of the fret-saw. The idea was not an original one, *but a map measuring 30 by 40 inches does allow for the insertion of Braille place names.*

The purpose and function of these maps should be clearly understood. They are to *supplement* the small individual maps. *A large map is still an individual map to a blind person, and cannot be used as a class-teaching map as can its corresponding counterpart in the sighted school.* A map of this size, by allowing for the insertion of names, does enable a blind person to discover directly from it, and by his own endeavours, *the position of one place in relation to another—the primary function of a map.* Maps of this type, therefore, should play a prominent part in the equipment of any school or college for the blind.

(iii) The Boyle Maps and Guides.

These new "Maps and Guides" were first issued by the N.I.B. in 1927. They were a re-issue of the original Boyle type of map of 1876, but contained many improvements and additions. They were designed by the late Mr. Arthur Boyle, son of the original G. R. Boyle. Two maps and one guide constituted a set, one map showing mountains and rivers, the other towns and rivers. Both maps contained single letter signs, which indicated principal points, whether on the coast or on rivers. These signs were arranged in a clockwise manner round the map, commencing at the top right-hand corner. The key to these letters was contained in the guide. In addition to these signs, the key took the reader on an imaginary journey round the map, and by this means the name of every town and river or mountain range could be ascertained. *These maps and guides constituted the greatest advance to assist the teaching of geography which had been made for some time.* The one difficulty I encountered was that when

it was unavoidably necessary for a child to proceed direct to these maps without any experience of the papier maché maps, they found them difficult to follow at first, but children with that previous experience got on well with them.

(iv) "A Geography of the British Isles," a Text-book compiled especially for the Blind.

The consequent success of my methods of teaching geography led me to offer my experiences to the Northern Branch of the College of Teachers of the Blind at one of its meetings in 1931. There I outlined much of what has just been written, together with the suggestion that text-books of geography should be written especially for the blind rather than merely transcribing any book at random into Braille. The idea was sympathetically received, and I commenced a compilation of the Geography of the British Isles. This was published in 1935 and has received a warm welcome. The paper I read, "The Teaching of Geography in Schools for Blind Children," eventually led to my being called as a witness before the Joint Committee of the National Institute for the Blind and the College of Teachers of the Blind to inquire into the problems relating to the education of the blind. This, in its turn, brought maps from different parts of the world to my notice. Among these were those made in plywood by means of the fretsaw from Australia. It appears that over there they have a society which stimulates interest in maps for the blind of this type. Such a society has everything to commend in it, since these maps have to be produced singly, and named singly also. This takes a great deal of time, and on a commercial basis the cost of production would be enormous. Yet, produced in this manner, these maps are most certainly worth while. From Germany came another type of map. It showed relief by means of contours, *and had some names on it*. I do not agree with contours for the blind, except by very advanced students, for it is so easy to confuse contours with coastline, but I do commend the names. Here was an individual map containing names. It showed that something could be done.

(v) The New Papier Maché Map of England and Wales.

In 1935 the N.I.B. approached me with regard to a new map of England and Wales. After much discussion and experimentation, a sub-committee of both the N.I.B. and the College of Teachers decided on a new papier maché map of England and Wales similar to the old one, but that it should contain all the signs of

the "Maps and Guides" together with the names of surrounding seas in full, and suggestive letters for the names of towns. It was soon found that no definite system could be adhered to, since the first and second letters or the first and last would only lead to confusion. BN could either be Brighton or Bridlington, so both methods had to be used, and even any other where ambiguity might occur. It was also decided to use contractions to help out. In this way some 125 towns were named: with those towns situated on rivers the names of the rivers were also given. A short guide of 8 pages was sufficient. My blind friends would have liked the relief a little more pronounced, and I agree with them. There was a little misunderstanding which was not realised at the time. All, however, speak highly in favour of the map. The letters of the towns are so self-suggestive that resource to the key is not always necessary. It was unfortunate that the issuing of the map should coincide with the declaration of war in 1939. This map is also of special help to the partially sighted, for it is superimposed on a map specially prepared for the partially sighted and not on an ordinary atlas map. No doubt, had there been no war similar maps of Scotland and Ireland would have appeared. What will happen after the war is a matter which only the future can decide.

(To be continued)

LISTEN !

By EVA M. WELLS (*who is blind*)

WHIRRING, whirring, whirring,
The manifold wheels go round ;
Mumbling, screeching, roaring,
A venomous heap of sound.
Screwing, moulding, packing, folding,
Can't any more tasks be found ?

Silence, silence, silence—

For pity's sake stop, and think
Whether God created

His masterpiece, man, to sink,
Drowsy, craving, nerve-racked, raving,
His walk but a shuffling slink,

Downward, downward, downward,
The slave of his erstwhile friend ;
Clothed and fed and carried,
With scarcely a stretch or bend ;
Hardly turning, faintly yearning
To dodge a machine-ruled end.

THE SOUTHAMPTON BLIND ON WAR PRODUCTION

THE September issue of THE NEW BEACON contained an article by the Rev. A. R. Cooper describing a Production Unit established by Folland Aircraft, Ltd. on the premises of the Southampton Association for the Welfare of the Blind to perform a number of light engineering jobs. We are glad to be able to publish the details of this conspicuously successful experiment.

The Unit, which is housed in two rooms and an annexe of the Association, provides employment for twenty-nine blind men and three women, who, with the exception of two home workers, were previously classified as unemployable. The average age of the workers is 49 years. Five are over 65, and two are under 25 years of age.

The point should be made that these workers are a typical cross-section of the blind community. Men and women with equal ability could be found on almost every Local Register. Only four were skilled factory operatives before losing their sight; four were labourers; two, store-keepers; two, sailors; a baker; a pastry cook; a milk roundsman; an estate agent; and a musician.

The light engineering jobs done in the Unit are in no way exceptional: repetition assembly; de-burring; rivet sorting; screw cutting, by hand and power-drilling, are all operations which are available in most industrial areas, and on which the blind have proved their ability. Folland Aircraft, Ltd. has supplied the necessary equipment and has co-operated with the

Association in improvising accommodation and making the adaptations to enable the blind to attain full production. An ingenious apparatus, consisting of a narrowing metal slot let into the vertical face of a bench, has been devised for the rivet sorters. The head of the rivet is inserted into the slot, slid up until it will go no further, and then dropped into a receptacle fixed into the bench directly underneath that point.

Folland Aircraft, Ltd., to whose imaginative co-operation the scheme owes much of its success, provides a sighted member of its staff as a full-time Supervisor, and a sighted inspector checks the finished article. This amount of supervision is not more than would be provided under factory conditions. The Unit's output (it is believed) compares more than favourably, in quantity and quality, with that of the dispersal units staffed by sighted workers. The blind workers are paid on a flat rate which, in all but a few cases makes augmentation unnecessary.

In addition to the thirty-two workers in the Unit, the Association has found employment for fifteen blind persons in other local factories. This means that 25 per cent. of all the unemployables between 16 and 65 on the register of the Southampton Association are now in full production. The Association believes that even this splendid achievement does not represent a total mobilisation, as another thirteen registered blind are available for employment in its Unit as soon as additional accommodation is available.

PERSONALIA

Dr. P. M. EVANS, formerly Clerk to the Clothworkers Company and well known for his distinguished service to Blind Welfare, celebrated his 84th birthday and golden wedding day at Lyme Regis on 3rd December.

* * *

Miss SWANN, for the past 14 years Matron at Bannow, the National Institute's Convalescent and Holiday Home, St. Leonards, has retired. When the Home was bombed in September, 1942, Miss Swann was seriously injured and was in hospital for three months. At the end of December, 1942, she resumed her work at the Institute's Emergency Home, Totteridge, which had received the residents evacuated from

Bannow, but she has never made a complete recovery and much to the regret of all who have come under her charge, ill-health has necessitated her retirement. She has greatly endeared herself to all visitors and residents. She made Bannow one of the most popular Homes for the Blind in the country, and approximately 650 blind men and women visited the Home regularly.

Miss Swann was trained at the Middlesex Hospital, and was a Reserve Naval Nurse in the Royal Navy from 1915 to 1921, spending a good deal of time in the eye department. Among other posts, she was Night Sister at Moorfields Eye Hospital from 1923 to 1928. She was appointed Matron of Bannow in 1929.

POST-WAR PLANNING

THE simultaneous publication this month of two new N.I.B. Bulletins is an important contribution to post-war planning. The first of them—Bulletin No. 14—“Nursery Schools for Blind Children,” is, in form, a review of the past; it is a report on the development of the Sunshine Home Nursery Schools by Miss Nancy Catty, who was appointed Nursery School Adviser to the National Institute for the Blind in 1932 in order to apply modern nursery school ideas and methods to the special problem of very young blind children. Since then the Sunshine Homes have changed their character. Particular emphasis was on care; it has been shifted to education. The devoted women who, as Mr. Eagar says in his foreword, made the Sunshine Homes from their inception “radiant centres of happiness,” reaped their reward in the affection of the children they loved. While they were building up the Sunshine Home tradition, the theory of Nursery School education was rapidly developing. Miss Catty’s Report shows how it worked out with blind children. It was written for the Institute’s Council. It is anything but an eulogium or an apology. It is rather an explanation. The N.I.B. has published it as it stands, in order “to give all who serve blind children the opportunity of profiting by the lessons which the Institute has learned.” At the stage now reached the co-operation of teachers in the schools for the blind to which Sunshine Home children go is particularly desired. Conferences on a limited scale between Sunshine Home and other teachers have been held in the course of the last year or two. We would like to think that before long Miss Catty’s Report might be the subject matter of a full-scale conference attended by those who are directly concerned with the Sunshine Homes, teachers in other schools who follow up their work and authorities on nursery schools outside the range of Blind Welfare.

The other Bulletin under reference—Bulletin No. 15—“Blind Welfare After the War,” is a detailed study of the Tomlinson and Beveridge Reports resulting from the work of a special Committee appointed by the National Institute and published under its authority. The laudable speed at which the Disabled Persons (Employment) Bill, foreshadowed in the King’s Speech at the opening of the present Session, has been proceeded with deprives the Report, as published, of the authority of the Institute’s Council. Publication had to be accelerated; but we may add that the Council at its meeting on the 9th December endorsed the Committee’s Report with hardly a dissentient voice and forwarded it as an expression of its views to Mr. Bevin and Mr. Tomlinson. It is now being widely circulated and again we venture to express a hope, in this case that it will be most carefully considered and discussed. The Regions, whose conference-function is not the least important part of their commission, will have no reason to complain of lack of material. The Report is a piece of meticulous but sympathetic criticism. It analyses the proposals made by Mr. Tomlinson’s Committee, which are all the more important because they have been embodied as they stand in the Bill, which received its second reading in the House of Commons on the very day that the Institute’s Council met. Its comments on the Beveridge proposals will be considered when the White Paper on Social Security, promised by the Government, is issued. But Social Security is the inevitable background against which all post-war plans must be viewed, and that part of “Blind Welfare After the War” which relates Tomlinson to Beveridge is of immediate value. It reconciles the two sets of proposals, in particular relation to training and augmentation of wages and it reaches the conclusion that “skilful combination of the Tomlinson and Beveridge proposals will bring within reach a plan which is comprehensive and at the same time specific in its several parts for the welfare of the blind, considered not only as recipients of public bounty, but as contributive citizens.”

Nothing could be better calculated to effect the skilful combination here spoken of than the Bulletin’s scrupulous examination. The Committee gives its fullest assent to the Tomlinson Committee’s main principles of rehabilitation and resettlement, which, they say, are “in full accord with the fundamental principle of Blind Welfare, namely, that handicapped persons should be assured not only of financial support, but of occupation under conditions which approximate as nearly as possible to the normal.” The criticisms which it makes, with force derived from comprehensive knowledge of the

blind and the existing system of Blind Welfare, are mainly of the Tomlinson Committee's bias towards thinking that "the blind are a race apart from other men," whereas "the true interests of the blind are best served by bringing them as fully as possible into the main stream of national life." Employment of the blind has got out of focus. The sheltered workshop for the blind will always be an important element in Blind Welfare, but the emphasis has been on providing employment for the blind rather than on creating conditions under which the blind can work side by side with their fellow men. We would prefer the term "handicapped" to "disabled," but the substance of the new policy is more important than its terminology. The inclusion of the blind with other handicapped workers in a scheme for the benefit of them all will open wider horizons to the existing workshops for the blind and to those blind persons who have been cruelly misclassified as unemployable for no other reason than that they were not regarded as trainable for the limited number of workshop crafts. Let no one cling to the Blind Persons Act of 1920 (with its successive expansions) as though it constituted a sacred Charter of Rights for the Blind. That was a great Act in its day; much in it is of permanent value, but it and all it means would cease to serve its purpose if it hampered Blind Welfare from expanding even on lines which its enactors could not foresee.

A PICTURE OF BLIND WELFARE

The leading article in the September issue of *Outlook for the Blind*, published by the American Foundation for the Blind, is a full-length picture of Blind Welfare in England under wartime conditions, contributed by Mr. T. H. Tylor, of Balliol College, Oxford. A picture of Blind Welfare in England to-day from the point of view of a blind man who has achieved distinction in many ways and who has long been concerned, in an honorary capacity, with the interests of the British blind community, should be studied by all workers for the blind in this country.

Mr. Tylor treats the subject as a progressive advance "On Five Fronts"—Employment, Education, Social Intercourse, Rehabilitation and Preservation of Sight. Under Employment, he shows how the wartime need of labour gave an impetus to the placement of the blind in industry, and he hopes that after the war a revision of the definition of industrial blindness will enlarge the number of blind persons recognised as employable. "Our definition of unemployability is radically faulty. . . . we have to devise new criteria of employability." Under Education, he deals with the research into the education of the pre-school child and with the acceptance of the principle of selectivity, foreseeing a general reorganisation of the education of the blind after the war. He points out that war-time conditions have quickened Social Intercourse and considers that "a vastly varied assortment of contacts" will form a permanent contribution to the fuller life of the blind. After describing the work for the war-blinded being done by St. Dunstan's and the National Institute, he stresses the importance of Rehabilitation, perfected as a technique, on the future of all people who lose their sight in middle or later life. In the field of Preservation of Sight, he recognises the fact that we have much to learn from America, and explains the importance of the steps recently taken in the promotion of research in this country by the foundation of a Department of Ophthalmology at Oxford and a Chair of Ophthalmology at the London Royal Eye Hospital. These steps, and the formation of National Committees to study the subject by the Ministry of Health and the National Institute, render the time "ripe for extensive development."

It is worth noting that Mr. Tylor pays tribute to a number of people professionally engaged in British Blind Welfare. He gives credit where he thinks it is due to individuals who have been particularly responsible for the developments he describes. We have no doubt that the generosity of Mr. Tylor's outlook no less than his stimulating survey of developments and possibilities will be appreciated by his American readers.

Mr. Tylor's conclusion is worthy of long remembrance: "It is the silver lining of the war clouds that I would indicate, those shafts of enlightenment and radiant gleams of hope which I trust justify my claim that the blind shall share to the full in the paradoxical progress—richest booty of the battlefields."

THE EDITOR.

CORRESPONDENCE

To the Editor.

The Country Blind.

SIR,—I was amazed to learn from the article "The Blind in Town and Country," in the November issue of *THE NEW BEACON*, of the very few social amenities open to the Country Blind as depicted by Mr. Jones.

Happily, these conditions do not exist in our county (Hampshire), where every blind reader is given the opportunity and encouraged to become a member of the National Library, free of charge, as our Council, under the Local Government Act, 1929, pays an annual Capitation Grant for each reader, and the postages on books are met for all necessitous cases from our voluntary funds.

I quite agree that in a rural area it is not easy to arrange social gatherings, but, owing to our long-established organisation comprised of Voluntary Visitors in every town and village, it is possible to have monthly Classes and Socials in various parts of the county. The Socials, etc., are arranged on suitable days to enable the more isolated people to travel to the centres by bus, when their fares are met from the voluntary income.

Surely this Association does not stand alone in giving such amenities to the Country Blind?

Yours, etc.,

E. NANCY WHITTOME,
County Secretary,

• *Hampshire Association for the Care of the Blind.*

To the Editor.

The Problem of Walking Alone.

SIR,—I was glad to find in your current issue an interesting article by Dr. L. Fuchs on this subject. Some of the cases cited seem to be important, and a little more detail would have been welcome.

Dr. Fuchs raises several points which I am sorely tempted to take up, but I have lately begun to study the subject a little more seriously, and until my views are somewhat settled it would be inadvisable to write much in public.

I must, however, say a word in defence of Tom's experiments. In the first experiment there is nothing to remark on; both face and ears were covered. In the second the face was covered and the ears left free, and Tom was able to get about his room quite easily. In the third, with face bare and ears covered, he found great difficulty.

Now Dr. Fuchs suggests that Tom's success in Experiment 2 was due, not to his unhindered hearing, but to his perfect familiarity with his surroundings. No doubt memory did help, but if we admit that for Experiment 2, we must admit it also for Experiment 3, which was made in exactly the same place, with a very different result.

Tom's failure in Experiment 3 is attributed to the interference with the great intensity of concentration which Dr. Fuchs says is necessary whenever a blind man moves alone, even in his own room (a place so well known to him that, on Dr. Fuchs' own showing, he can walk about it quite easily from memory alone). Once again: If this white-hot concentration was so drastically upset by covering the ears, why was it not also interfered with in Experiment 2 by covering the face, since under the air-pressure theory the face is just as important as the ears, or more so?

Nevertheless, I agree that the experiments are not conclusive. A carefully-planned series of tests must be made before we can be sure whether or not any other organ than hearing is involved. I have tried to devise one or two such experiments lately, and should welcome the co-operation of Dr. Fuchs or anyone who may be interested.

Yours, etc.,

Oxford.

W. H. COATES.

To the Editor.

Studying Blind Welfare Questions.

SIR,—In reply to the letter by "A. K.," published in the November issue of *THE NEW BEACON*, may I say that the London Study Group exists for the purpose of thrashing out just such questions as he raises; desiring, indeed, to acquaint itself as fully as possible with the facts, so that it may, in due course, make a worthy contribution to such improvements as may appear necessary in blind welfare and education.

Interested as he seems to be, we should welcome "A. K." to membership of the Study Group, or, failing this, would gladly give any help or advice necessary in the founding of a similar group in his locality.

Yours, etc.,

ERIC LEARY.

Ombersley, 2, Broomhill Walk,
Woodford Green, Essex.

To the Editor.

The Lonely Blind.

SIR,—I am certain you are right in suggesting that many blind people are lonely, but I am equally certain that the proposals you make for combating that loneliness need to be greatly enlarged. You mention the desirability of Local Associations compiling rotas of people who would visit the blind in their own homes, but surely most, or at least many of these, already have lists of Honorary Visitors. You add that appeals for help of the sort we have in mind might be made through the Press and at meetings of one kind and another. This would be easy enough to arrange, but would it produce a response of the right kind? Pity, goodwill and a sense of duty would doubtless all be forthcoming, but friendship is not built on these. There is another way of attacking the problem, and it may well be that the present time is particularly opportune for the kind of attack I have in mind.

Of the younger blind people who are lonely I would ask: "What are your hobbies? What hobbies do you want?" Armed with this information I would approach the appropriate groups in the community. I would draw blind and seeing persons together on a basis of common interest, by the sharing of a common enthusiasm. I would, on occasion, initiate a group. If I knew, for example, that a number of blind people were interested in music, or gardening, or the productions of the local Repertory Theatre, I

would, through the Press, try to discover whether there were not other people who shared these interests, and I think I would hear at the present time, both of coteries which were depleted and welcomed reinforcement, and of individuals who learned with pleasure of others sharing their particular enthusiasms. Perhaps it is hardly necessary to say that the name of no Blind Society would appear in any newspaper inquiry.

I know only too well, of course, that even if my highest hopes were realised there would still be many people wretchedly isolated. Some by age perhaps, some by inability to get about alone, some by "unfortunate" mannerisms, some by shyness of their blindness, some by their diffidence in taking the initiative (which in my experience, nearly always seems to be necessary), some because they will not make due allowance for certain uninformed but well-intentioned person with sight. But here is a concrete proposal. If there is anything new about it it is to establish Clubs for the Seeing—primarily, to Help the Blind. And there is one more thought. Apart from the obvious advantages of membership, apart from the new life that would open up, there would be the supreme satisfaction of mutual embarrassment being swept away—swept away by pursuits so compelling that Blindness and Sight for a time lost their significance.

Yours, etc.,

J. DOUGLAS KIRKPATRICK.
Moseley, Birmingham.

AN EASTERN ENCOUNTER

From "The Gobi Desert" (Mildred Cable and Francesca French).

"... **S**OMETIMES we met a fellow-traveller who, far from being tragic, provided us with entertainment by the way. The pitiless Eastern sun was dipping towards the horizon. The long day's march was over and we sat in the courtyard of a Chinese inn which was the only hostelry in a lonely gully. . . . Presently I noticed a young boy approach, leading a strange looking man by means of a short stick, of which each held one end. The man's clothes were ragged, and he had every appearance of extreme poverty. I saw at once that he was blind, yet his face bore the expression of one whose inner being is supplied with some constant and secret delight. His body was broad and well developed, but his bare feet and ankles were the smallest I ever saw attached to so powerful a frame, and he walked with a

delicate mincing tread, as though stepping to the rhythm of a tune that he alone heard.

"He sat down on the ground and with a quiet absorbed air said very simply: 'This is the male eagle's call.' Then followed a perfect bird call, reproducing the sound so familiar to us in wild mountain ranges. 'Now listen,' he went on, 'the female pitches this note and the little ones in the nest call out thus for their food.' Then followed the various cries, each with a subtle change of intonation. He then gave in rapid succession the different notes of the wild pigeon, the pheasant, the magpie, the king-fisher, the water wagtail and the hoopoe. With complete accuracy he reproduced the travel-call of the wild geese when the birds cleave the air, taking their way to the south marshes. For a full half-hour this beautiful concert continued. The

liquid notes, the delicate trills and warbling sounds filled the grimy courtyard with such melody as is only associated with shady woods and babbling streams.

"I asked him how he came by so much bird-lore and he replied: 'I just listen.'

" 'When did you lose your sight?' I asked him.

" 'I was born blind,' was his reply.

" 'He lives alone with his mother and she too is blind,' the small boy explained. 'They are very poor and when visitors come to the inn I bring him here and so he earns enough to feed them both, but when there are no travellers he and his mother go hungry.'

"I placed a loaf of bread in his basket and a little string of copper coins, which sent him away

delighted at so generous a reward, although it represented merely the value of a few pence in my own country. Darkness was coming on and his young guide took him by the hand to lead him away. Day and night were but a change of word to him, and as he trod his way daintily through the filth of the inn-court his face still gleamed with the delight of artistic achievement.

"In what semblance did the country appear to this blind man's inner vision? Was he seeing surroundings as beautiful to the eye as the bird-songs were to his ear? The wretched inn, the dirty yard, the human squalor were nothing to him, whose hearing was always alert to nature sounds, whose movements were measured by some instinctive rhythm, and whose face shone with a rapt absorption in a beauty to which I, and not he, was blind."

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Prevention of Blindness: Reprints for the Specialist.

Three reprints from professional journals have recently been published which are of special interest and importance to those concerned with prevention of blindness. They are:

(1) *Regional Treatment of Ophthalmia Neonatorum* (Dr. Jameson Evans), reprinted from the *Lancet*, September 11, 1943. He describes the method used in Birmingham to combat infantile ophthalmia, the incidence of blindness from this disease being extremely small, only one case having been reported in the past seven years.

In 1926 it was agreed to concentrate notification and treatment of o.n. as far as possible at the Birmingham and Midland Eye Hospital; all midwives within the jurisdiction of the city's public health department were obliged, and others outside that jurisdiction but in the vicinity encouraged, to send cases of purulent ocular discharge in infants to that hospital. Here a ward for mothers and babies requiring in-patient treatment is provided, and since 1939 treatment with sulphapyridine has been standard; it is usually succeeded by sulphathiazole (as agreeing better with most babies than sulphapyridine) after two days if the eyes are not clear of discharge. Since 1930 a system of regular home-visiting by qualified ophthalmic-trained nurses has been in operation, and in this way the home environment can be controlled. Any midwife in the city area having a baby with discharging eyes in her care must, if the discharge began in the first three weeks of life, send

it to the Birmingham and Midland Eye Hospital; all gonococcal cases are admitted, and also many cases showing streptococcal or other virulent cultures.

As a result of the measures taken, o.n. is under control in the Birmingham area, and no increase in infantile blindness has been noted since the war from this cause.

(2) *The Scope of Prevention in Ophthalmology* (Dr. Ida Mann), reprinted from the *British Medical Journal*, October 16, 1943, is a review of three articles in the Journal, by Dr. John Marshall and Dr. H. E. Seiler, which were noted at some length in THE NEW BEACON for last March (page 55). She gives the list of the seven most important causes of blindness (quoted in our article) and comments on the fact that though at first sight the first four causes given (cataract, myopia, venereal disease and uveitis) would suggest that the greatest amount of blindness occurs in the older age groups, yet actually only half the cases became blind after 50, and in nearly two-thirds of these the underlying cause had started before that age, and so operated early enough to constitute a risk of economic importance. She also comments on the apparently low percentage of blindness from injuries (6.42 per cent.), but points out that most industrial eye injuries lead to loss of one eye rather than both, even when severe, and thus do not appear in statistics of blindness, though of great economic importance. Dr. Mann goes on to consider the advances which must be made in three directions in order to reduce

eye disease: improvement of our ophthalmic services, education of the public and research into aetiology and therapeutics.

(3) *The Detection and Significance of Melanophore expanding substance in urine and blood with special reference to retinitis pigmentosa* (Dr. J. Mutch and Donald Mackay, M.A.), reprinted from the *British Journal of Ophthalmology* (October, 1943) is a highly technical article, with argument and conclusions only to be appreciated by the ophthalmologist.

Canadian Prevention Propaganda.

The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, with the authorization of the Canadian Ophthalmological Society, has recently published four leaflets, entitled *Sight-Saving Classes*, *Protecting the Sight of School Children*, *Children's Eye Accidents*, and *Unnecessary Blindness*. In collaboration with the Canadian Welfare Council, it has published *The Cross-Eyed Child*, *Ophthalmia Neonatorum* and *Home Training of the Blind Child*. *Better Light* deals with artificial and natural lighting in school and home.

All the pamphlets are simply worded and free from technical terms, so that they can be safely placed in the hands of parents, teachers and welfare workers. They are published free of charge, and should serve a very useful purpose. An excellent photograph on the outer page of the pamphlet serves to drive home the lessons it teaches.

Chorleywood College Magazine (1942-1943).

This is always a lively account of a school which must surely have as full a record of hard work and play as any girls' school in the country, while the news of the activities of those who have left show an amazing width of interest and accomplishment. We read of one old pupil being sent overseas with a Naval Contingent of V.A.D.'s, of another with a First Class diploma in Household Management who has taken a post as Assistant Matron in a school, of a third who is working as costing clerk in an aircraft factory, and of masseuses, teachers and telephonists. Short stories, articles and verses, together with reports on the year's work of a number of School Societies, combine to make a magazine which must be full of interest to past and present members of the school.

Some Hints for the Newly-Blind and Their Friends.

A pamphlet bearing this title is issued with the October number of the *Teacher of the Blind*, and may also be purchased separately from the Hon. Registrar, College of Teachers of the Blind, Dorton House, Dorton, near Aylesbury, price 6d. It consists of extracts from Sir

Arthur Pearson's "Conquest of Blindness" and Lieut.-Col. Sir Ian Fraser's "Whereas I Was Blind" on such practical matters as finding one's way about in the house, social intercourse, table manners, outdoor sports and indoor games, and is intended to break down that barrier of self-consciousness and shyness which sometimes hinders easy free relations between the blind and the seeing. So far as we know, nothing of this kind has been published before in pamphlet form, and the leaflet should meet a real need. Even acting as guide to a blind person is not too easy to the man or woman who does it for the first time, and simple advice, given as it is by two blind men who have so wonderfully overcome their handicap, is welcome.

Southern Regional Association Conference.

A very full Report has now been published (Conference Reports, No. 7) of the proceedings of the General Conference held on June 25 by the Southern Regional Association and addressed by Mr. G. Tomlinson, M.P., on the Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled Persons, and Mr. Eagar, Secretary-General of the National Institute, on Voluntaryism in Blind Welfare in Post-War Reconstruction. The Tomlinson Report is one of the most important documents relating to blind welfare in a post-war world, and those who were not able to be present at the Conference will specially welcome the opportunity this Report gives to learn at first-hand what Mr. Tomlinson had to say.

OBITUARY

We deeply regret to announce the deaths of:—

William Eichholz, the founder of the Alfred Eichholz Clinic, on 18th November, aged 94. Mr. W. McG. Eagar, Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, writes: "Every blind masseur, who has received the tangible benefit of employment on the staff of the Clinic or the scarcely less valuable benefits which accrue from the increased prestige for massage by the blind which the Clinic has created, owes Mr. William Eichholz a debt of fervent gratitude. I made his acquaintance after the death of Dr. Alfred Eichholz. I heard then that a cousin older than Dr. Eichholz had so great an affection for him that he had wished to benefit Charities in which he was particularly interested, and as that plan was no longer possible, he would be glad to

consider some worthy memorial. I was able to make some suggestions, and saw at once that only something practical and businesslike, likely to produce substantial benefits, would have any chance of success. Fortunately, our suggestions were of that character: that for a West End Centre of Massage, which would give a start to a continuous series of masseurs entering on practice and would, at the same time, act as a visible headquarters for the profession of Massage by the Blind and demonstrate their capacity to London, made a particularly strong appeal to Mr. Eichholz. He put down the whole money required for its establishment and equipment, on the understanding that in all respects it would at least hold its own with other West End Massage Centres.

"Mr. Eichholz continued to take a lively interest in the progress of the Clinic. He applauded our policy of keeping the Clinic open in the bad times we went through at the beginning of this war, and rejoiced to know of the success which in the last few years has rewarded that optimistic policy. Only a few weeks before his death, on hearing that the Clinic needed further apparatus, he unhesitatingly gave it.

"The lustre shed by the Clinic on the memory of Dr. Alfred Eichholz is reflected back on Mr. William Eichholz's generosity."

W. W. Kelland, M.A., County Alderman of Middlesex County Council and Alderman for many years of the County Borough of Hornsey. His death will be a grievous loss to those who worked with him both in Hornsey and in the County, and to those who worked with him in Blind Welfare, one of his foremost interests, both locally and nationally. Formerly Headmaster of Oakfield School, he had a penetrating understanding of the needs of education in which he took a life-long interest. The result of his love of progress can be read in the records of the Committees on which he sat and the schools which they served. Mr. Kelland had been interested in Blind Welfare for many years. As Chairman of the Blind Persons Act Sub-Committee of Middlesex County Council, as a member of the Committee (for 21 years), Chairman and Honorary Treasurer of the Middlesex Association for the Blind, as a member of the Committees and Sub-Committees of the Greater London Fund for the Blind since its inception, as a member of the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind since 1930 (recently as a representative of the Southern Regional Association for the Blind), he had played a leading part in the revolution of blind social welfare which has taken place during the past 20 years.

While satisfied by nothing short of the best work, Mr. Kelland always showed the greatest consideration for the people working under him. He himself gave lavishly of his time and brain to whatever work he undertook: his broad outlook and sound judgment piloted the Middlesex Association for the Blind through years of growth and development, and his work will remain an inspiration to those who knew him.

Lady Bertha Dawkins, who in 1932 became President of the "Followers of the Star" Carol Parties—the blind carol parties who first sang under the name of the Dickens Carol Party in 1925 and some nine years ago became amalgamated with the Carol League formed for the purpose of including sighted parties all over the Greater London area. Lady Bertha showed great interest in the blind members of the parties and did everything in her power to make the social side of the work a great success. She asked the blind people to her house, presented prizes, and was present at concerts and bazaars in the West End which raised large sums of money for London's blind. The carol singers and all those connected with their work, especially Mrs. Cresswell, the original organiser of the parties, will greatly miss their President, and will remember with affection her generous support and kind interest.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE BLIND

Blind Factory Worker Broadcasts.—Miss Kate Reynolds, a blind woman of 25, broadcast in "Home Talks" last month. She has been working for a year in a Coventry factory. She began by doing inspection work, but she and her friend (also blind) made such excellent progress that they were promoted to the assembly of aero-engines and the earning of piece-work rates.

Miss Reynolds is one of a group of 12 blind women employed by the firm. Their initiative in inspection and small assembly work has astonished the firm, and they are "100 per cent. timekeepers."

Home Workers Now Assembling Engines.—Two of the Home Workers, formerly knitters, attached to the Coventry Society for the Blind, have been promoted in the factory where they now work to the assembling of aero engines at piece rates. The management has been very pleased with their speed and accuracy.

A Blind Refugee's Activities.—A German-Jewish refugee from Hamburg, at the request of Miss H. Grey, Home Teacher, Birmingham, has written an account of his activities, as a comment on or supplement to Mr. Bawtree's recent articles in THE NEW BEACON: "Before I lost my sight I was general manager of an export firm. For five years after I was blind I was able to continue my business, employing a secretary, to whom I taught enough commercial Portuguese to deal with my correspondence. I learned where to find my stock and how by touch to recognise my samples, so that often sighted members of the firm appealed to me when in difficulties.

"Since coming to England my wife and I have managed hostels for refugees, and I have discovered I am able to do many things I never attempted before losing my sight.

"In the hostel, where no other man is employed, I have repaired chairs and cupboards. On one occasion the door of a corner cupboard was broken and hung upside down for three days. No one knew how to mend it. Then I tried. I found four screws, each 6 inches long, and without any help I managed to fix up the hanging door. When electric plugs and ball taps are out of order I repair them, and by filing old keys I fit them to drawers and locks as required. I help in the kitchen in washing up, reply to all telephone calls and interview applicants for admission to the hostel. When mice have been busy in skirtings and floor boards I repair the damage they have done. The house is centrally heated and I am responsible for attending to the boiler, cleaning and refuelling it. When necessary I attend to other fires, lighting them and replenishing the coal.

"For all this work it is only necessary to be very patient and to have no fear."

REVIEWS of REPORTS

Home

Leicestershire Institution.—One feature of the year's work has been absorption of 20 blind persons into sighted industry, and we read of one blind man who "has never been late, never missed a shift and never had any rejected work." Many blind women are knitting for the Forces, and one deaf-blind woman was happy to receive a special letter of thanks from a member of the crew of the *Penelope*. The organiser of the Appeals Department speaks gratefully of the

generous help always given in areas where soldiers are billeted; they "support our efforts wholeheartedly."

Kent County Association.—"Such are the Association's ambitions" runs a sentence in the Annual Report. The ambitions relate to the proposal to set up a Home for the Blind as soon as possible after the war to meet the needs of about fifty people who are anxious to enter a Home if one can be provided within the county. An appeal for £25,000 for the foundation of such a Home is being launched. The Association cares for over 2,000 blind people, and during the past year has expended nearly £7,000 on their direct welfare. The Report has that note of personal intimacy which is sometimes lacking, and devotes a generous amount of space to an account of the year's work of a Social Club recently founded at Tonbridge and conducted by the blind themselves; the Club's programme for the year included a talk on mission work on the Gold Coast, a play, recitals by the Club's own choir, a Bring and Buy Sale, and three garden parties. A tribute is paid in the Report to the happy relations existing between the Association and the National Institute, and to the work of the latter in providing services which are outside the range of possibility for a purely local body.

Royal Midland Institution, Nottingham.—This is the centenary year Report of the Institution, which cares for over 2,250 people in the county and county borough of Nottingham and the county of Derby. Of these approximately 1 per cent. are children of school age or under, rather under 1 per cent. are trainees, 8 per cent. are employed and the remaining 90 per cent. are "unemployables." Sales reached a record figure of nearly £53,870, owing to the large demand for Government goods, and a minimum wage scheme ensures wages ranging from £3 7s. 10d. to £2 12s. 3d. in the Nottingham area. Domiciliary assistance to the unemployables in the county reached a total of nearly £39,800. The Institution has lost by death its President, the Duke of Portland, who for nearly twenty years had held this office and had always shown warm interest and sympathy in the work.

Empire

Dadar School for the Blind, Bombay.—The Dadar school numbers 35 pupils, and it is interesting to know that one former pupil has proceeded to a High School for the seeing, where he is making good progress; two other pupils are about to pass on to sighted schools. The Report quotes comments upon the school from official records, the Educational Inspector,

Bombay Division, writing:—"These children seemed to be quite at home . . . moving about freely, playing vigorously and enjoying their school life much in the same way as normal children do." Another School Inspector writes:—"I was particularly struck by the cheerful atmosphere of the place and quietness and efficiency with which the work was being carried out." The Report notes the publication of "The Visually Handicapped in India" by its Principal, Mr. R. M. Halder.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR THE BLIND,
224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

Customers, please note.

The Showroom of the National Institute will, in accordance with regulations for early closing during the winter months, be open from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. from the 8th November to 22nd January. The closing time on Saturdays will be as usual at 1 p.m.

The Showroom will be closed from Thursday, 23rd December, at 4 p.m. until Tuesday morning, 28th December.

NEW PUBLICATIONS.

BRAILLE MUSIC.

The prices of the following pieces of music represent a fraction only of the actual cost of production

Dances :		s.	d.
19058	Dominguez, A. To-night, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19059	Reisfeld, B. You rhyme with everything that's beautiful, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19060	Rogers, Roy and Strauss. I'm looking for a melody, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6
19061	Young, E. You'll be happy, little sweetheart, in the spring, <i>Song Fox-Trot</i>	0	6

BRAILLE BOOKS.

Forthcoming Panda.

No. 76. *Reprisal*, by Ethel Vance. 3 vols. 1s. 6d. net the set.

This exciting, extremely able story of the people in a French provincial town gives a grim but moving picture of France under the German heel. The heroine is French to the core—realistic, passionate, poetic, heroic.

MOON BOOKS.

4682 Ben Hur, from the World's Great Stories, re-told by the Right Hon. W. S. Churchill. Price 1s. Daily Text Calendar, 1944. Small volume. Price 1s. 2d.
Christmas Cards. Four varieties. Price 3d. each.

LETTERPRESS.

19149. N.I.B. Bulletins, No. 14. *Nursery Schools for Blind Children*. A Report on the Development of the Sunshine Home Nursery Schools from 1932 to 1943. By Nancy Catty, M.A. With an Explanatory Foreword by W. McG. Eagar, M.A., Secretary-General of the National Institute for the Blind. 6d. net.

19150. N.I.B. Bulletins, No. 15. *Blind Welfare after the War*. Report of a Committee appointed by the Executive Council of the National Institute for the Blind on the proposals made by Sir William Beveridge on "Social Insurance and Allied Services," and by the Inter-Departmental Committee on "The Rehabilitation and Resettlement of Disabled Persons"—The Tomlinson Report—in relation to Blind Welfare. 6d. net.

ADDITIONS TO LIBRARIES.

STUDENTS' LIBRARY.

	Vols.
Philosophy :	
Joad, C. E. M. <i>God and Evil</i>	6
Theology :	
Jones, A. L., and others. <i>Our Prayer Book and Our Life</i>	4
Sociology and Politics :	
Bryce, James. <i>The American Commonwealth</i>	30
Morgan, A. E. <i>Young Citizen</i>	3
Trainin, I. <i>The Stalin Constitution</i>	1
Economics :	
Meade, J. E. <i>Introduction to Economic Analysis and Policy</i>	6
Law :	
University of Cambridge, Faculty of Law.	
Mr. Bailey's Lectures on Property (A)	1
Mr. Bailey's Lectures on Property (A) (Incumbrances), and Professor Winfield's Lectures on the Law of Tort (3)	1
Science :	
Hudson, W. H. <i>Birds in a Village</i>	2
English Literature : Criticism :	
Davies, H. S. <i>The Poets and Their Critics Chaucer to Collins</i>	3
Prose :	
Swift, J. <i>The Battle of the Books, and The Bickerstaff Papers</i>	1
Poetry and Plays :	
Connelly, M. <i>The Green Pastures</i>	2
Graves, Robert. <i>No More Ghosts, and Read, Herbert. Thirty-five Poems</i>	1
History :	
Nevins, A., and Commager, H. S. <i>America</i>	8
White, G. W., and Kennedy, E. C. <i>Roman History, Life and Literature</i>	4
Miscellaneous :	
Čapek, K. <i>Letters from Spain</i>	1

LONDON STUDY GROUP.

The next meeting of the London Study Group will be held on Saturday, 8th January, 1944, at 3.15 p.m., National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1. Applications for membership are cordially invited.

ERIC LEARY,
Chairman.

NATIONAL DEAF-BLIND HELPERS' LEAGUE

40, Green Road, Hall Green, Birmingham, 28.

Christmas Appeal.

During this war period, everyone will realise that our needs are greater than ever. It is with confidence that we again make our Annual Appeal, for, with your generous response, our Christmas gifts will not have to be curtailed.

All donations will be gratefully acknowledged, and should be sent to Mrs. L. Johnson, the Hon. Secretary, at the above address.

ADVERTISEMENTS

ADVERTISING RATES: 1s. 6d. A LINE (MINIMUM 5s.)

WANTED. Gentleman's Braille wrist-watch, good working order. Send particulars to L. Fitzgerald, 380, Jersey Road, Osterley, Middlesex.

HOME TEACHERS EXAMINATION, 1944. Candidates anxious to obtain guidance and qualified instruction to assist them in gaining the Diploma are invited to apply for particulars of a Correspondence Course to H. N. Vickerstaff, Birmingham Royal Institution for the Blind, Court Oak Road, Birmingham, 17. (Enclose 2½d. stamp.)

PRESTON HOMES FOR THE BLIND.

WANTED. Resident Assistant Teacher, Certificated or Uncertificated. Salary in accordance with Burnham Scale III, plus special school increment and bonus. Board residence provided for additional supervision duties. Apply: The Superintendent and Secretary, Lytham Road, Fulwood, with copies of testimonials.

A MATRON REQUIRED for a Home for 15 to 17 Blind Men at Forest Hill, S.E.23. One with experience of blind preferred but not essential. Age 40-55 years. Some knowledge of Sick Nursing an advantage. Apply: The Indigent Blind Visiting Society, 3, Vandon Street, Buckingham Gate, S.W.1. Telephone: Abbey 3239.

LADY, with wide experience of **BLIND WELFARE WORK**, including case-work, interviewing and administration, **REQUIRES POST** in London. Thorough knowledge of Braille, Braille shorthand, typing, telephony and statistical work, and accustomed to reporting meetings, compiling reports and articles, and general secretarial work. Apply to C., c/o The Editor, THE NEW BEACON, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL. APPOINTMENT OF HOME TEACHER FOR THE BLIND.

Applications are invited for the position of sighted certificated female Home Teacher for the Blind, under 40 years of age, for duty in Heywood and Whitefield.

Salary £156 per annum, rising by four annual increments of £13 per annum to £208 per annum, plus War Bonus, at present £33. 16s. per annum, together with travelling expenses.

Previous service as a certificated Home Teacher with a Local Authority or an Agency for the Blind will rank for service on the salary scale.

The successful applicant will be required to live in or near Heywood or Whitefield; to pass a medical examination, and to contribute to the County Council Superannuation Scheme. The appointment will be subject to one calendar month's notice by either side.

Applications, in applicant's own handwriting, accompanied by copies of not more than two recent testimonials, stating age, experience and qualifications, must be received by the County Medical Officer of Health, County Offices, Preston, not later than Saturday, the 1st January, 1944.

GEORGE ETHERTON,
Clerk of the County Council.

County Offices, Preston.

N.I.B. NEEDS TYPEWRITERS.

If any friends of the blind have typewriters for sale, can the National Institute for the Blind have first chance? Standards or portables. Standard makes. In good working condition. Address: Secretary-General, National Institute for the Blind, 224, Great Portland Street, London, W.1.

HOME TEACHER (sighted) required by the **NORTHAMPTONSHIRE ASSOCIATION FOR THE BLIND**, for County Area. Must be able to drive car. Certificated—salary in accordance with qualifications and experience. Uncertificated—commencing £156 per annum, plus £26 War Bonus. Applications, stating qualifications, experience and date of birth, etc., with three testimonials, to Mr. S. Jackson, Secretary, Association for the Blind, Gray Street, Northampton.

ROYAL MIDLAND INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND.

Applications are invited for the position of certificated sighted Home Teacher in Nottingham at a commencing salary of £180 per annum (plus war bonus) rising to £210.

Particulars of experience and qualifications, together with copies of testimonials, should be sent to the undersigned not later than December 31st, 1943.

A. C. V. THOMAS,
Superintendent and Secretary.
Chaucer Street, Nottingham.

COUNTY BOROUGH OF MERTHYR TYDFIL.

Applications are invited from persons not over 45 years of age, for the appointment of a sighted Male Certified Home Teacher and Visitor of the Blind, at a salary of £180 per annum, plus war bonus. The appointment will be subject to the Local Government Superannuation Act, 1937, and the successful applicant will be required to pass a medical examination. Applications, stating age, qualifications and experience, accompanied by copies of two recent testimonials, must be delivered to the undersigned not later than the 31st December, 1943.

EDWARD ROBERTS,
Town Clerk.

Town Hall,
Merthyr Tydfil, Glam.

WEST SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL. APPOINTMENT OF ASSISTANT HOME TEACHER FOR THE BLIND.

Applications are invited for the above whole-time appointment (women), the duties of which will be to visit the blind in the county in their own homes, to teach them as far as possible to read Braille or Moon type, to instruct them in simple pastime occupations, and generally to assist in promoting the social welfare of the blind. Preference will be given to applicants holding the Certificate of Home Teaching of the College of Teachers of the Blind. Salary £175 per annum, rising to £200 per annum, plus cost-of-living bonus and travelling allowance according to County Scale for the time being. Particulars of appointment and forms of application may be obtained from the undersigned, by whom applications, accompanied by copies of not more than three recent testimonials, must be received not later than 24th December, 1943. Canvassing in any form, direct or indirect, will disqualify.

L. G. H. MUNSEY,
Clerk of the County Council.
Shire Hall, Bury St. Edmunds.
22nd November, 1943.

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